

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

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

Board Members Absent: Eric Cramer, Rosina Miller, Ingrid Schafroth

Others Present: Jurate Krokys, CEO; Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Richard Taggart, Teacher Representative; Sheba Verma, Development Director; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Cara Carroccia (parent), Robin Kohles (parent), Kristin Nocco (parent), David Webber (parent), Andrea Yanez (teacher)

I. Call to Order

President Susan Gobreski called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

II. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated.

Sean motioned to accept the minutes. Laval seconded.

The following changes were made to the minutes: on page 3, change the word “loose” to “lose;” on page 4, add that Susan Gobreski has agreed to chair the policy committee; and on Resolution #7a, change the wording to “not to exceed \$1,262.90 per month.”

Unanimous to approve with the noted changes.

III. Public Comment

There were not public comments made at this point in the meeting.

IV. Updates

A. ICS Teacher Representatives

Susan suggested meeting with the teacher representatives and other teachers to see what we all want included in the report each month. One possibility is special teacher presentations, as have been done in the past. Ideas are welcomed. Rich Taggart reported that he and Kerri Tobin did request input for tonight’s meeting and there was only one teacher response, which was to suggest that ICS subsidize parking costs. He also circulated copies of the revised Middle School report card. Andrea Yanez also noted that the 1st and 2nd grade Immersion report cards have been revised.

B. PTA- No representative was present; no report was given.

V. Reports:

A. CEO Report

Susan explained that she met recently with Jurate to review changes in the CEO report, which will be specifically focused on what staff is doing.

Jurate stated that she appreciates now having this structure. She read highlights of this month's report (attached):

- World Cultures- Students in the Gifted Support program will be required to participate in the 1/10/06 National Geographic Bee; the International Committee has planned holiday assemblies with the theme "Festival of Lights," featuring class presentations on celebrations involving light; the Heifer International collection for buying a llama for a Bolivian family continues; the first cycle of country studies is underway
- Language Programs- Maestras Adrienne and Erika attended the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Languages conference recently and will report on that soon; Maestra Claudia continues to meet regularly with Immersion teachers
- Middle School Development- there have been regular Middle School staff meetings dealing with various issues; staff on the 4th floor are concerned about being isolated, in addition to other issues
- Instructional Programs- After some delays this year, the Gifted Support program has begun; the Enrichment program has been revamped to ensure consistent, quality programming for all students; additional teachers will participate in the international GLOBE science program in January
- Programming- ICS will be applying for a Response to Intervention pilot project opportunity, which is designed to look at successful schools with research-based curriculum to determine what works very well and areas that can be even better than they already are; ICS has applied for the Golden Apple award; and ICS will be receiving a Keystone Award for meeting Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) two years in a row
- Teacher Development- Starting in January, there will be a list of workshops that teachers have attended since the beginning of the school year, as well as in-service and weekly meeting topic lists
- Enrichment Utilization- Changes will start next Wednesday and will include fewer specialists, but will provide more consistency. Teachers are using this meeting time well and are grateful for the opportunity to meet
- Recruitment- Michelle Campbell and Joana Davis-Diaz are assisting with targeted recruitment efforts
- Enrollment and Attendance- Attendance has been consistency high. Enrollment is lagging somewhat due particularly to the number of students currently in 2nd grade Immersion classes. Jurate emphasized that students transferring out of the

Immersion program is an issue that is addressed on many levels to determine if the child can be successfully supported in Immersion before the final decision is made to move the child to FLES. Discussion around this point ensued and it was agreed that Maestra Claudia will be asked to provide a detailed summary by the 2/06 BOT meeting as to reasons students have transferred out of the Immersion program to determine if there are other proactive steps that can be taken to prevent this happening in the future.

- Performance Tests- nothing to report
- Report Card Conferences- These are underway
- Reports due to the state- We are current in our reporting
- Development and Fundraising- Sheba has been very busy and recent fundraisers have been well-organized and successful. Everyone was encouraged to buy ICS calendars, which were printed at cost by an ICS parent

B. **BOT Committees-** Susan reminded everyone that circulating committee reports includes two steps: 1)uploading to the Yahoo group, and 2)e-mailing the report as an attachment to the members of the group and to Megan (megans@independencecharter.org). Copies of the Protocols and Practices for Committees and a minutes outline was distributed. BOT members need to report all reports before each BOT meeting and we will work towards only making a few hard copies to be available at the meetings. Leftover copies will be made available for parents to pick up in the front desk area. In the future, we hope to have all committee reports, except for the HR report, available on our website.

1. Treasurer/Finance Committee

Sean reminded committee chairs to submit their budget requests for the next fiscal year by 1/15/06; they should be sent to Jurate and him. The revised budget was circulated; Sean explained that numbers in parentheses are “bad” numbers. Jerry explained that overall ICS is in good shape; one reason for that is that we hadn’t budgeted for the anticipated increase in the city’s student allocation. However, that increase did come through and is reflected in the revised budget. The following resolution was proposed:

Be it resolved the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the attached budget revision for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

Sean moved the motion; Becky seconded.

Discussion: Jerry pointed out that line #8 regarding the Sol y Canto program was accidentally omitted from the revised budget; that results in a net decrease of \$3,637.

The motion passed unanimously.

Jerry circulated the November financial report. The following resolution was proposed:

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the attached expenditures for November 2005, which total \$81,992.39.

Sean moved the motion; Becky seconded.

Discussion: Christine asked for clarification on line #100; Jerry explained that we were able to save money by purchasing a lot of the supplies needed to complete summer projects, instead of ordering them through vendors. Susan asked what is included in "Other Purchased Services." Jerry explained that this includes travel expenses, professional development and other items; he agreed to ensure that staff development go only under its specific line item in the future. Further clarification was made that Pediatric Therapeutic Services is our speech therapy vendor.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Curriculum

Christine reported the committee had been asked to determine whether ICS will be able to "collapse" classes in upper grades; at this point, it is clear that more work needs to be done before we can make that determination. She emphasized that more time is needed to do long term planning for the Middle School and that after discussion with Susan it was decided that a structure will be developed to discuss this issue at each BOT meeting. Christine will circulate the framework. Michelle stated that she feels we need to commit money to work with experts to assist us in planning if that's what's needed, because the Middle School teachers have the perception that there is currently no focus on their curriculum, since discussion on the Middle School curriculum seems currently focused on how the Middle School Immersion program will look. Jurate remarked that parent Donna Sharer, who has professional experience with curriculum development, has been assisting and will continue to do so. Sean commented that we should have a FLES sub-group of this committee, since there is already an Immersion sub-group. Christine agreed that we will be doing that. Discussion around how ICS decided when to start having 50% of the day in English for Immersion students started. Comments included that research shows that the longer you wait to introduce English, the better the students do in the foreign language and in English; however, we had to be mindful of standardized test scores in order to keep funding flowing, so at this point we start the 50/50 day in 3rd grade. Pam commented that this can always be changed in the future. Committee member Cameron Voss and Christine are drafting a homework policy that will then be shared with focus groups of parents and teachers, who will be surveyed about the proposal and about their current experience with ICS homework. Discussion ensued as to what the ICS

homework policy should be; it was agreed that we need to be sensitive to the needs of both parents and teachers. It was also emphasized that the final decision will be research-based and not arbitrary. The committee is hoping to make visits to several other “model” schools with Immersion programs during this school year. Christine and Joana will be meeting to discuss curriculum development; Christine noted that this must be a top priority, but has been overlooked due to other pressing matters. The committee also reviewed a proposed technology plan outlines by parent David Peterson, which would include a Saturday computer club for 7th graders to help them with computer skills needed for high school.

3. Human Resources

Susan suggested that the Curriculum and HR committees hold a joint meeting soon to discuss what the future ICS staffing plan should look like. **Becky** reported that the next committee meeting is on Friday. At the meetings, Jurate gives an update of the day-to-day issues of ICS staff. Becky noted that Joana has been making contacts with universities that offer masters degree bi-lingual programs in hopes of recruiting some fully certified teachers for the Immersion program. Michelle has been making contact with several African American colleges to recruit there as well. The committee is also working on the benefit package for 2006-2007. The following resolution was proposed:

Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT revise it's tuition reimbursement policy as follows: Full-time classroom and specialist teachers (excluding non-teaching assistants and non-teaching professional staff), are eligible for up to one thousand two hundred dollars (\$1,200) in tuition reimbursement per year. Reimbursement is based upon a maximum of six hundred dollars (\$600) per course. Only classes reasonably related to education will be reimbursed. A grade of A or B (or its equivalent) must be earned for the course in order to receive this benefit. The Chief Executive Officer must approve the course in advance. Reimbursement will be made upon presentation of an invoice and proof of earned grade to the CEO.

Becky moved the motion; Ryan seconded.

Discussion: None.

The motion passed unanimously

The following resolution was also proposed:

Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT revise it's policy manual section 8.10 dealing with progressive disciplinary process for employees as follows:

ICS anticipates that every employee will observe basic rules of good conduct when dealing with other employees, supervisors or parents and children, and to adhere to ICS policies and practices. Reasons the CEO could initiate disciplinary process include, but are not limited to: violations of established work rules, absenteeism, tardiness, negligence

in performance of duties, insubordination, child abuse, theft or sabotage and/or substandard work performance. The process of disciplinary action may include verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension, performance probation and termination. This process, while progressive in nature, does not preclude taking action appropriate to each situation. Immediate termination is always an option if the employee's performance jeopardizes the health, safety, or rights of students or other employees.

Procedures for Handling Corporal Punishment Complaints

The CEO or designee shall investigate all reports of corporal punishment committed by ICS employees. Both complainants and respondents may put in writing the details of the incident reported. An investigation may include the following:

Information from students.

Information from employee's supervisor(s).

Information from parent(s).

Information from employee(s).

If a violation is found, the CEO shall take prompt actions to ensure against a repetition of the violation. These actions may include:

In-service training.

A verbal warning against any repetition.

A written warning against any repetition with a copy placed in the personnel file of the employee.

If in the judgment of the CEO, the violation is of a flagrant or persistent nature, the incident shall be reported to district level administration who shall take prompt and appropriate action that may include probationary status, suspension with or without pay pending an investigation into the incident, and/or termination for cause.

Appeal Procedure: *If either party in a corporal punishment violation incident is dissatisfied with the action taken, a written request for reconsideration may be filed with the Board of Trustees within 20 days of the action taken.*

Becky moved the motion; Anyabwile seconded.

Discussion: None.

The motion passed unanimously

4. Facilities

Nicole reported that the committee has re-thought the timeline for renovations on proposed sites and has concluded that a more realistic target date for being in our renovated space, wherever that may be, would be September 2008---not 9/07 as originally thought. Nicole reviewed and explained that the "full program" that has been contemplated for each of the facilities is more of a wish list as opposed to a requirement and that such full program requires approximately 74K square feet. Nicole then presented a

comparison of the full program to a reduced program and noted that the reduced program makes some assumptions that would ultimately need to be executive decisions (such as providing for 1 music room instead of 2). The space requirement for the reduced program is approximately 60K square feet. The reduced program can fit into each of the Durham, North American Street and Liberty Square facilities. In addition, both Durham and North American can be partially renovated to fit the reduced program with a view towards later renovations to expand to the full program. A cost comparison of the reduced program to the full program for Durham and North American as well as a test fit drawing of the reduced program in Liberty Square was also presented.

Nicole urged the BOT consider giving permission for the Executive Committee to offer a letter of intent on either the Durham or N. American Street property before the next BOT meeting, since our renovation timelines necessitate our starting by February 2006. Susan clarified that our legal counsel has advised that we cannot negotiate a purchase in good faith on more than one property at a time. A lively discussion followed with the following points being made:

- Pam- why can't we be poised for a special meeting instead?
- Susan- we need to give parents the "4th column" (pros and cons of staying at our current location) before making a decision
- Jurate- the size of the space does matter. Staying at our current location would be fine if we get more than 51,000 square feet. I also have concerns about two high schools in such close vicinity----CHAD and the new one next to the library. Durham would give us a chance to expand
- Sean- I favor Durham over N. American Street and Durham over our current location. I recommend passing a resolution on a letter of intent for Durham. If within 10 days CHAD says we can get at least 51,000 square feet for 15 years, then we should meet and decide.

The meeting adjourned into Executive Session at this point to discuss contractual negotiations related to leasing the current site; no one was asked to leave the room. Then the public meeting continued.

- Ryan- I agree with Sean. I favor Durham, because it is intended to be a school; our kids need a gym and outdoor space. I feel that may make students more productive.
- Becky- I prefer Durham over N. American, but can't yet decide between Durham and our current location

- Sean- In response to concerns about the cost of purchasing, in the long term, owning might be cheaper; in the short term leasing would be cheaper
- Christine- We're still a new school. We seem to hesitate to do some of the things we should do. Although the current space is limiting, I feel we should continue to lease here and worry about a building in the future. People mention that the Durham building would be good, because it was always a school; however, traditional schools were modeled after factories. I can't decide between Durham and N. American at this point; possibly a more unconventional space would let us be more creative.
- Laval- I prefer Durham and agree with Sean's suggestion.
- Lisa- I agree with Sean; I prefer Durham overall. If we did stay here and put more money into academics, do we have the space?
- Jurate- If we move, we will continue to have high quality programs. Staying in our current space could inhibit us in the future.
- Pam- I prefer Durham over N. American. I prefer our current location over Durham.
- Anyabwile- I was excited about the N. American space after seeing it, but now would pick Durham overall. I also feel we need two computer labs.
- Nicole- I agree with Sean; I prefer Durham over N. American, but can't decide between Durham and our current location. I'm not "sold" on our needing 74,000 square feet, but having only two full floors in our current location concerns me.
- Joana- I prefer Durham over N. American. I prefer N. American over our current location. I don't think this is the best, safe space for my son. And I think having your own space gives your school an identity and could make us stronger.
- Michelle- If CHAD would give us three floors, staying here would be more viable. But, only 51,000 wouldn't give us room to grow. Durham is a better option for us to move into. I'd like more information on the reduced size programming.
- Kristin- There doesn't seem to be room to grow here.
- Jurate- Our current location also has lots of HVAC issues.
- Robin- Durham would have natural light in all classrooms, would have a full gym and we would have a playground we could have plowed to allow the students to get outside on most days.

- Cara- I prefer Durham, because it has always been a school. It would also provide potential tax breaks for a for-profit that would partner with us if we adhere to historic preservation requirements.
- Susan- I prefer Durham over N. American. Being downtown is important to me. The school has done a lot for the community. I'm concerned that because parents often base housing decisions on schools, that our current location helped many people make the decision to send their children to ICS. I also fear of being "house poor" as a school. I'm not sure if I can decide between here and Durham. Jurate and I met with Ellen Hanna, who is second in command at the Center City District Office. She offered some advise in not being too concerned about missing a purchase opportunity, because a chance at something else always comes up.
- Susan- Maybe we should wait for more input from parents
- Sean- I want to move the resolution.

The following resolution was proposed:

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes its officers to submit a letter of intent to purchase the former Durham School for a purchase price to be determined by the Executive Committee, with the offer contingent on acquisition of adequate financing, necessary zoning variances, permission to transfer the ICS Charter to that location, and other appropriate factors.

Sean moved the motion; Michelle seconded.

Discussion: Becky asked if we should amend the resolution to state when the Executive Committee would or wouldn't act on the resolution. Pam asked whether we need to discuss the Pincus building option. Susan and Sean reported that Pincus hasn't offered ICS a deal. Nicole added that the realtor feels the owner may easily change his mind about to whom to rent.

A roll call vote was made:

Sean- Yes

Susan- Yes

Ryan- out of the room at the time of the vote

Becky- Abstain

Christine- No

Lisa- Yes

Laval- Yes

Pam- Yes

Joana- Yes

Anyabwile- Yes

Nicole- Yes

Michelle- Yes

Sean asked if we should now discuss when we'd move on sending a letter of intent? Pam stated we need to know if we can "live" in 51,000 square feet. Susan stated that we need to give parents more information

before making a decision. Nicole suggested that we give CHAD until the eve before the next BOT meeting to give ICS a lease offer. Joana asked whether the letter of intent is actually an offer. Nicole clarified that we do need to act in good faith. Lisa stated that she feels we've been bending over backwards for CHAD. Pam stated that we need to stay on good terms with CHAD, because we need to be in our current location for at least two more years. Sean asked for clarification as to whether he's clear that at the January BOT meeting, we'll either be showing the BOT CHAD's offer or the Durham letter of intent. Susan stated that we can't guarantee that we'll have a CHAD offer by then.

5. Development- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

6. Community Relations- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

7. Policy- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

8. Executive- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

9. Diversity- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

10. Healthy Kids- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

11. Discipline- Meeting was adjourned due to the late hour; no report was given.

VI. Old Business

The following resolution was proposed:

Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT approve the expenditure of \$600 on September 22, 2005 to Nurse Leslie Burton for tuition reimbursement.

Becky moved the motion; Pam seconded.

Discussion: None

The motion passed unanimously.

VII. New Business

The following resolution was proposed:

Be it hereby noted that the following employee is no longer employed at ICS: Nateria Morrison, formerly full time NTA.

Becky moved the motion; Sean seconded.

Discussion: None

The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Adjournment

Susan moved for adjournment; **Becky** seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 10:34 p.m.