

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
March 8, 2006 7:00 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Anyabwile Banko'le, Michelle Campbell, 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:** Becky Baehr, Ryan Boyer, Christine Chisholm

**Others Present:** Jurate Krokys, CEO; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Richard Taggart, Teacher Representative; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Blake Smith, Fran Melmed, Ed Cataldi, Kristin Nocco, Maya Golphin, Marcie Lichtman-Lentz, Wally Curran, Cassandra Carponter, parents

**I. Call to Order**

**President Susan Gobreski** called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated.  
Eric motioned to accept the minutes. Rosina seconded.

**III. Public Comment Period**

**Susan** opened the floor to public comments, which included:

- Ed Cataldi- Has the Board considered (ICS) going through high school?
- Blake Smith- I feel like my child's future at ICS is up in the air. How much energy is going to be able to be focused on things other than the new facility?
- Sean H- There is some uncertainty. We've concluded we can't stay here due to CHAD's plans. The Facility Committee is working to find the best place we can be.
- Jurate- Over the past five year, there's been wonderful work by Board committees.
- Nicole- I think it is a focused plan. We know what we cannot live with and what we absolutely want. Financially, we know we can't have everything on our wish list, but we do know our "must haves."
- Susan- We've identified it as optimal to get our own building. I'd give a different answer as to whether or not we could stay here.
- Fran Melmed- It seems information on the facility search has suddenly evaporated. I think that means you're not handling communication well. Also, what are the criteria for teachers in Immersion? We love our child's teacher, but we sometimes find communication a barrier.
- Joana- I've been actively recruiting bi-lingual, certified teachers by going two routes, the education department and the Spanish department.
- Fran Melmed- What is the "pecking order?" Being a native speaker? Being certified?
- Jurate- We need native speakers. With No Child Left Behind (NCLB), certification becomes a bigger issue; we can't have too high a percentage of emergency or non-certified teachers. Native speakers and certified teacher are on par with each other.

- Maya Golphin- I'd like to speak with Ms. Campbell about a bus matter (Michelle agreed to speak with Ms. Golphin separately).
- Susan- I've also heard that communication is an issue.
- Nicole- No big decisions have been made about facilities; there has been nothing to report.

#### **IV. CEO Report**

Susan asked whether there were any updates or additions to the report Jurate had circulated. Susan asked what staff are doing to recruit teachers. Jurate said that ICS teachers are telling their teacher friends about ICS and that ICS will be sending representatives to Penn's career fair later in March. Michelle stated that a friend of hers who is involved with Penn Charter, which participates a private school career fair, has agreed to forward some resumes to ICS. Susan noted that possibly charter schools could use the private school career fair model in the future.

Jurate gave a summary of the TerraNova summary that was added to the report, noting that ICS has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and that the fourth grade Immersion group is very unusual, 80% of the students in that group qualify for the Gifted Support program. She also noted that science scores do not count at this time. Teachers are currently preparing students 15-20 minutes a day for the upcoming PSSA tests. She also noted that the Sol y Canto event was a huge success. The final results are not in, but it looks like the net revenue may reach \$7,000—even though this event was not planned as a fundraiser. Jurate further stated that we learned development lessons from this experience; we know that our ads were too expensive. Michelle thanked Lisa and David Webber for their amazing work on Sol y Canto. Pam suggested that now we might want to try something on a bigger scale that would be more affordable to people city-wide. Joana noted that Kristin Nocco and Sandra Adair did a stunning job on the refreshments. Nicole suggested that ICS consider asking donors for pledges; Lisa cautioned that we make sure none of our fundraising efforts interfere with the PTA's Silent Auction in May. Jurate stated that another fundraising letter will go out to parents later this month. Jurate said Sheba is working on three grants with the assistance of Lisa and Ingrid. Sheba also wanted Jurate to remind the Board that 46% haven't made their contribution this year. Susan reminded people that we're not a fundraising board; however, if we all give something, no matter the amount, we will be giving 100% as a Board.

#### **V. PTA Report**

**Cassandra** handed out Silent Auction donation forms and stated that the PTA would love if the Board donated baskets again this year. She reported that at the March meeting, the PTA approved purchasing a surround-sound system for the music room & shirts for the fourth grade choir. The Dr. Seuss contest went very well; plans are underway for the next Scholastic Book Fair at the end of March. The April meeting will be a potluck dinner with poetry reading.

#### **VI. Teachers' Report**

**Rich** noted Pr. Jurate met with the teachers last week to discuss questions about maternity leave. Staff also discussed possible changes in the enrichment program, the possibility of starting an honor roll, the salary structure, and staff

anxieties about where ICS will be located. He reported that once again the staff development day was very good with presentations by various staff. He also requested that committee agendas and dates be circulated as early as possible. Several Board members interjected that the schedule of committee meetings had previously been circulated to all teachers and that notification would be given if there were changes in dates. The possibility of setting up regular reminders was also noted. Jurate also stated that Tr. Rich did a fabulous job in prepping the fifth grade students about Nimbia. The students hosted several visitors from Nimbia today and asked amazing questions.

## **VII. Committee Reports:**

### **A. Finance**

**Sean H.** reported that Jerry Santilli was unable to make tonight's meeting. Sean asked the Board to review the financial report materials. Pam asked what the Stroud Water payment was for; Jurate noted that was for the GLOBE training in February. Pam also asked for clarification on check #2292; Jurate pointed out that was most likely for membership renewal with LaSalle. **Eric** moved that the financial report be approved; **Rosina** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Sean pointed out that we will start a contract with a new janitorial service, Personal Touch, as of April 1<sup>st</sup>; this will result in a substantial savings each month. Jurate and Ramzy visited a place larger than ICS and were very impressed with the work. **Sean** moved the following motion:

*Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the CEO to enter into an agreement with R&A Personal Touch Cleaning Services for custodial services for an amount not to exceed \$5800 per month once appropriate contract review has occurred.*

**Eric** seconded. Sean pointed out that Terry Henry is reviewing the contract. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Sean** moved the following motion:

*Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes the CEO to admit a fourth kindergarten class for the 2006-07 school year.*

**Anyabwile** seconded. It passed unanimously.

Sean stated that the other proposed motion will be held until the next Board meeting, since the full text was not made available before this meeting. He explained that in order for charter schools not to lose the monthly rental subsidy from the school district, they general set up another entity that would own the building. Then the charter school rents from that entity. All of the board members of the new entity (in the case of ICS, it would be the "Worlds of Opportunity") would need to be approved by the ICS Board. This would also prevent the problem of losing the building if for some reason we ever lost the charter.

### **B. Facility**

**Nicole** reported that the committee has spoken with a developer about a site at 12<sup>th</sup> and Fitzwater, which is currently a low-income housing site. They are also looking at a site at 4<sup>th</sup> and Germantown. She discussed a resolution on the table

this evening to engage an exclusive real estate agent. Nicole noted that we would exclude certain properties from the contract; also she stated that the Arden gave glowing references for this group.

Rosina asked whether we've considered buying land and building; Nicole stated that would be too cost prohibitive. Lisa asked what shape the North American Street property is in; Nicole said the timeline for renovating that was about the same as for the Durham property. She pointed out that Durham does not look optimistic. Pam said she thinks we need to find a better location than North American Street. Joana asked how much time do we have, since we're already off our timeline. Nicole stated that the original timeline was extremely conservative, so that if we move ahead in the next few months, we should be able to stay on schedule for a move by the 2008-2009 school year. She also noted that we've been trying to get in to see the property at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Walnut without success. Binswanger wants us to commit to them before showing properties. Kristin Nocco asked, "Doesn't the Board of Trustees need to draw the line to say, we'll do something by\_\_?" Pam and Rosina responded that we need to find the right place. Lavall pointed out that we do have a goal, which is September 2008. Joana noted that she's worried that we may be stuck and have too many classes. Lisa raised the point that the North American property seems like a viable site, except for parent objection to the location. Anyabwile noted that there were strong objections from a few parents, not a lot of objection. Jurate suggested that we plan for a group to see the North American site, since only a few people went to see it originally.

### **C. Curriculum**

**Christine** was not at the meeting; a written report was circulated. The committee is now meeting twice a month, since there is so much work to be done.

### **D. Human Resources**

Jurate needs to get the coordinator positions approved. Also, teachers are concerned about pay difference between ICS and the school district that occur over time. Susan pointed out that we standardize areas that we value. The following resolution is up for approval:

*Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve the following Teacher Pay Scale for the 2006-2006 school year, which includes a minimum annual increase of \$1100 for teachers currently employed as full-time classroom teachers at ICS who return to full time teaching positions in 2006-2007.*

Jurate pointed out that there is one edit to be made to the teacher pay policy sheet that was circulated; the starting salary is actually \$34,500 (not \$34,000).

**Nicole** moved the motion; **Anyabwile** seconded. Rosina asked why we are passing this again this year, since it was already passed before and wasn't changing. The motion passed unanimously without change.

**Eric** moved the following motion:

*Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approve a change in Health Insurance coverage for full time employees for the school year 2006-2007 from Blue Cross Keystone 5 and Personal Choice to Blue Cross C1/F1 HMO and C1/F1/01 PPO. Be it further resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees designates to the Human Resources Committee the authority to develop a method to reimburse staff*

*members for the difference in co-pays between the current plan and the new plan for the school year 2006-2007.*

**Sean H** seconded.

It was explained that there will be an increase in co-pays. For the upcoming year, ICS will pay the difference in the co-pay. This will be done through a third party to protect staff privacy, or we may give all eligible staff a particular amount of money to cover the estimated cost. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **E. Development**

**Ingrid** stated there was no committee report. Michelle noted that Blaine Stoddart, who is the head of a CDC in West Philadelphia, said he would be willing to meet, free of charge, with the ICS Board of Trustees to talk about raising money. He is known to be a good networker. Michelle suggested that Ingrid set up a meeting with him. Pam suggested that it might be good to set up a meeting with him on a night right before the Board of Trustees meeting.

#### **F. Discipline**

**Michelle** reported that VP Sean G. has created incentives for the Middle School students to “police themselves” regarding their dress code. She wants to create a focus group to talk about the dress code and is about to send out a parent survey.

#### **G. Community Relations**

**Joana** reported that the committee is working on putting together an advisory board for curriculum and development. She said that parents were surveyed at a recent PTA meeting. On Monday, a small group visited an Immersion (Spanish, French and Arabic) school in Washington, D.C. They also met with an Argentine diplomat, who is a friend of Sandra Adair’s; Sandra raised the possibility of his sitting on the ICS advisory board.

We’re running out of brochures and are in the process of updating it; Krisin Nocco circulated a draft and pointed out that we are not looking at changing the substance of the brochure at this time, only updating information and photos. Michelle suggested that we work on a separate brochure for teacher recruitment. Sean H asked whether this committee is now the Nominating Committee. Susan stated that the Community Relations Committee makes the nominations for parent seats, but that she will double-check the by-laws. Joana also noted that the committee is working on a survey to be handed out at the upcoming report card conferences.

#### **H. Healthy Kids**

**Pam** said the committee has not met recently, but Ramzy is going to meet with Aramark. Rosina asked whether we’d want to consider using the Archdiocese’s program again. Susan suggested sending out an e-mail to the parents who are interested in the issue.

#### **I. Diversity**

**Lisa** noted that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **J. Policy**

**Susan** presented the following resolution:

*Be it hereby resolved: Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year: Teachers in their first year of employment are eligible to borrow (from ICS) up to \$1200 per year for tuition for courses related to education, to be repaid through paycheck deduction in equal amounts pro-rated over the remaining payroll periods of the school year. If teachers leave ICS employment prior to re-payment, the total remaining amount will be deducted in full from the final paycheck. In order to be eligible for benefit, employee must obtain approval for the course from the CEO and must present a tuition bill for a course.*

*Beginning in the second year of employment, teachers are eligible for tuition reimbursement in the amount of a total of \$600 per course for up to 2 courses for a total of \$1200, courses to be related to education and completed with a grade of B or better. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, teachers must receive advance approval of the CEO and may submit the reimbursement request with proof of the completion of the course and demonstration of the grade.*

*The BOT authorizes the staff to draft language changes for the employee policy manual and to work with the business manager to create an administrative system to facilitate the administration of this benefit and to propose language changes for the employee policy manual.*

Sean H asked whether Jerry Santilli has looked at this plan; Susan confirmed that he has. **Sean H** moved the motion; **Rosina** seconded.

The motion passed unanimously.

#### **K. Legal**

**Michelle** noted that she and Eric met to discuss the parameters of this committee and requested that the other Board committees give input. Pam asked whether this committee will be a liaison between the Board and our lawyers; Michelle said that it will be.

#### **VII. Old Business**

Susan noted that the April BOT meeting will be re-scheduled to April 19<sup>th</sup>.

#### **VIII. New Business**

Susan announced that the Board conference will be this Saturday at Eric's office, 1622 Locust Street, from 9-3.

**The Board went into Executive Session at 9:20 pm to discuss real estate representation. The Board returned to public session at 9:32 pm.**

**Nicole** moved the following resolution:

*Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes its officers, the Legal Committee and the Chair of the Facilities Committee to negotiate and enter into an agreement to appoint Studley, Inc. as ICS's exclusive real estate agent.*

**Sean H** seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**The Board returned to Executive Session at 9:32 to discuss a confidential legal matter relating to a staff member. The Board returned to public session at 9:55 pm.**

**X. Adjournment**

**Sean H** moved for adjournment; **Nicole** seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from February 2006 meeting

CEO report

Facility Committee report

Finance Committee minutes

Financial Operations report (ending 2/28/06)

Policy Committee report

Teacher Pay Policy (note revision: starting salary is \$34,500, not \$34,000)

Curriculum Committee report

Community Relations report

Legal Committee report

Silent Auction donation form

Draft ICS brochure

**INDEPENDENCE CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Resolutions as Adopted  
March 8, 2006**

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7) Beginning in the second year of employment, teachers are eligible for tuition reimbursement in the amount of a total of \$600 per course for up to 2 courses for a total of \$1200, courses to be related to education and completed with a grade of B or better. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, teachers must receive advance approval of the CEO and may submit the reimbursement request with proof of the completion of the course and demonstration of the grade.

The BOT authorizes the staff to draft language changes for the employee policy manual and to work with the business manager to create an administrative system to facilitate the administration of this benefit and to propose language changes for the employee policy manual.