

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
June 14, 2006, 7:00 pm**

**Board Members Present:** Becky Baehr, Anyabwile Banko'le, Ryan Boyer, Michelle Campbell, \*Christine Chisholm (called in by phone for part of the meeting), Eric Cramer, \*Joana Davis-Diaz (called in by phone for part of the meeting), 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; Rich Taggart, Teacher Representative; Ramzy Andrawos, Operations Manager; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Karl Olsen, Caren Seltzer-Devine and David Webber, parents; Cassandra Carponter, PTA Liaison.

**I. Call to Order**

**President Susan Gobreski** called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm. She explained that several Board members will be calling in to participate in officer elections; therefore, elections will be held early in the meeting, rather than at the end.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated. **Rosina** noted that a few minor changes were made after the draft was circulated to the Board. Rosina motioned to accept the minutes. Sean seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

- **PTA Report**

Cassandra reported that the annual student talent show was great, as usual. She also noted that the First Annual ICS Field Days were well organized and a great success. The Silent Auction raised about \$14,000 for the ICS PTA Fine Arts Fund.

- **Teachers' Report**

Rich reported that there has been a request by some teachers for feedback on the comments they raised on their "Intent to Return" surveys; he also asked when teachers' 2006-2007 contracts would be available. Jurate responded that the contracts will be available tomorrow. Rich also noted that teachers felt the timing of the annual CEO survey was not good, since everyone is extremely busy and people may tend to take out end of the year frustrations, rather than give more well balanced input. He suggested either doing the survey earlier in the year, or even twice a year. Several

Board members noted how grateful they were for the hard work of all ICS teachers during this year.

- Officer Elections

Susan explained that the Board has decided not to have a secret ballot for this year's elections. Joana, Christine, Pam and Laval called in for the elections (note: during the election section of the meeting both Pam and Laval came in to the actual meeting).

Susan noted that two Board members, Michelle and Rosina, are running for President and asked whether there were any other nominations. No other nominations were made. Sean moved to nominate Michelle; Becky seconded. Eric moved to nominate Rosina; Pam seconded. Both Michelle and Rosina had an opportunity to speak regarding why they wanted to be Board President. Discussion ensued. A voice vote was taken:

Sean:	Rosina
Michelle:	Michelle
Becky:	Rosina
Pam:	Rosina
Nicole:	Rosina
Laval:	Rosina
Eric:	Rosina
Rosina:	Rosina
Ryan:	Michelle
Lisa:	Michelle
Ingrid:	Michelle
Anyabwile:	Michelle
Christine:	Rosina

Joana (was off the phone at this point, but had e-mailed her vote earlier in the day): Rosina

Susan: Rosina

Rosina is the new President.

Pam moved to nominate Michelle for Vice President; Anyabwile seconded. Susan moved to nominate Becky for Vice President; Anyabwile seconded. Discussion ensued. A voice vote was taken and Michelle was elected unanimously; she is Vice President.

Becky moved to nominate Sean for Treasurer; Ryan seconded. The vote was unanimous to elect Sean; he is the Treasurer. Michelle thanked Sean for his constant attention to detail.

Sean moved to nominate Nicole for Secretary; Rosina seconded. The vote was unanimous to elect Nicole; Nicole is the new Secretary.

Eric thanked Susan for being president during a very difficult year. Christine disconnected from the speaker phone after the elections were held.

- **CEO Report**

**Jurate** noted that the annual charter school report will be due over the summer; she noted that it is a huge undertaking and she will be asking for Board assistance on some areas of the report. Jurate also thanked Rich for organizing the fantastic 5<sup>th</sup> grade science fair.

### **III. Committee Reports**

#### **A. Human Resources**

**Becky** moved the following motion regarding health care reimbursement: *Whereas the ICS BOT has previously resolved to make changes to its health insurance coverage which results in higher co-pays for non-formulary prescription drugs and emergency room visits,*

*Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT approve a health care reimbursement program for returning staff in the 2006-2007 school year. The health care reimbursement program allows staff members to be reimbursed, on a quarterly basis, for the difference between the 2005-2006 co-pays and the 2006-2007 co-pays for non-formulary prescription drugs (\$15) and emergency room visits (\$65). Qualifying staff members will be required to submit receipts and complete appropriate forms, to be developed by the CEO or her delegate, in order to receive the benefit.* Sean seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Becky then moved the following motion regarding a proposed pay scale for Curriculum Specialists (a copy of the proposed scale was included in the Board packet):

*Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT adopt the attached pay scale for curriculum specialists.*

Rosina seconded. Jurate explained that a comparison was made with the school district's scale in creating this scale; Becky and Susan noted that this will not have a major change on the budget, because we planned for this potential change. The motion passed unanimously.

Becky moved the following motion:

*Be it resolved that the following individuals be offered full time positions as listed for the 2006-2007 school year under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract:*

*Tabitha DeJesus- Kindergarten FLES*

*Randi Harris- Grade 5 Language Arts*

*Alvaro Drake-Cortes- Grade 5 Math/Science*

*Sara Nissley- Grade 7/8 Language Arts*

*Alec Greenwald- Grade 7/8 Social Studies*  
*Ileana Aguilar- Counselor*  
*Ericka Morris- Teaching Intern*  
Rosina seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Becky moved the following motion:

*Whereas, consistent with it's non-discrimination policy, the ICS BOT desires to treat all employees equitably in employment policies and practices, and without regard for sexual orientation or marital*

*status;*

*Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT adopt the attached Domestic Partner Benefits Program which provides health insurance coverage for domestic partners of eligible ICS employees (proposed policy was circulated in the Board packet)..*

Pam seconded. Susan noted that the policy draft that has been circulated includes Becky's original draft, as well as Eric's suggested changes. Discussion ensued.

- Becky: We need to offer benefits like the school district; the City offers them too.
- Eric: I have proposed that this be offered for couples who cannot legally obtain a marriage license in Pennsylvania. I'm for equal coverage for all. The issue is for whom should we pay extra for health care. We need to worry about paying more money. People may live together, but not be a family. Why wouldn't we include grandmothers, etc.?
- Ryan: I don't think we should be spending money we don't have. I don't agree with it at all, but if we're going to give it to same sex couples only, wouldn't that be a potential legal problem?
- Pam: It seems that we benefit when one of our employees is the domestic of someone and that employee doesn't need benefits from ICS. It seems like a moral obligation; people have all different reasons for not getting married.
- Eric: I've never heard of this being challenged under Act 22.
- Becky: We have no way of knowing why people don't get married. I think it's our obligation under the law.
- Pam & Nicole: It would help keep us competitive.
- Anyabwile: We can't discriminate. Would we add a timeframe in which you need to report on your status?
- Becky: They're obligated to let us know if the relationship changes.
- Susan: I agree with Eric. They have to be in it for the long-haul. But I feel comfortable with Becky's resolution. We need to be mindful of the cost, but not make this decision based on that. We need to make decisions based on wanting to do this.
- Lisa: I think what Anyabwile meant is can we include a time element--- how long the couple needs to be together before being eligible?
- Nicole: They need to be living like a married couple.

- Anyabwile: I strongly support the institutions of marriage.
- Susan: It sounds like we have two main issues: 1) level of the “test,” and 2) same sex versus opposite sex.
- Becky: Terry Henry (attorney) found the test that is included in the proposed document
- Laval: Whole Foods has one that includes the couple having to be together for a year.
- Lisa: I like the idea of adding that the couple needs to have met the status for at least a year.
- Susan: Maybe we should require a year for opposite sex couples, but not for same-sex.  
Ryan moved to add that “*the couple must meet the criteria for one year*”; Lisa seconded.
- Becky: I don’t agree with that as a friendly amendment.  
A vote was taken. Eric and Becky were opposed; all others were in agreement. The motion passed. Pam requested that the school district’s policy be checked before we finalize the ICS policy. The Executive Committee will work out the final wording.

Becky also noted that CEO annual evaluation surveys were recently circulated to ICS teachers and administrative staff. Becky also reminded the Board members to complete their surveys no later than July 12<sup>th</sup>. She stated that since Jurate’s contract expires at the end of the next school year, these surveys are very important.

Becky also noted the committee will start to look at what the term “other experience” really means in the ICS pay scale. She also stated that Jurate has developed some great teacher evaluation forms and that we’re start to look at the policy manual in total. The next meeting will be the Friday morning after the July Board meeting.

## **B. Finance**

**Sean** stated that there will be a budget revision, but it won’t occur this month. He also reported that the cost of the third floor renovations may be closer to \$120,000 than the initial estimate of \$50,000. Ryan mentioned that he would like to suggest a possible contractor; he will e-mail the information to Sean. Sean also reported that the School District’s subsidy will be 2%, instead of 3% as we had originally estimated (and had thought that was a conservative estimate). This will result in about \$50,000 less than anticipated. Jerry then reviewed the May financial report. Sean moved to approve the May expenditures; Ryan seconded. Nicole asked whether funds left in the 2005-2006 budget can be used towards the mobile computer lab. Jerry responded that that money has been authorized to purchase other computer equipment. Ryan stated that he has gotten a commitment of \$7,000 towards the computer lab. The expenditures were approved unanimously.

### C. Curriculum

**Pam** reported that the committee wants to invite some curriculum people to present about two or three interesting new ideas at the July Board meeting; she wants to make sure there will be adequate time for full discussion. Pam also stated that she had noted in the last Board minutes that the Board wanted to be sure to be in agreement before ICS attempts to win grants; therefore, she opened a discussion about the possibility of the federal foreign language grant application that the committee would like to submit. The grant specifies the languages that can be included; not include Spanish, but include many other languages to which ICS students would be exposed. Donna Sharer has suggested that ICS work with Penn's Language Department to develop a language lab that would target ICS's FLES students. The application is due on 6/30/06. Sean asked whether the grant includes all the money needed to implement it and asked whether this is something we would want to do even if we didn't get the grant? Becky stated she thinks it's awesome. Lisa noted that it sounds like we're trying to make the program fit the grant and would like to see something more substantial to move ICS in a forward direction. Pam suggested that Board members continue this discussion during the next week to generate more suggestions.

Pam moved the motion following motion, which had been discussed at last month's meeting:

*Be it resolved that Independence Charter School adopt the New York City H.I.V. prevention curriculum.*

Michelle seconded. The motion passed with one abstention.

### D. Executive

**Rosina** reported that the plans to do major strategic planning are moving forward. So far five phone interviews have been conducted with potential facilitators. The cost estimated by these five ranged between \$15,000-\$20,000. The Committee has decided to have two of the five give a presentation. The basic model would include: meeting with small planning groups, interviews, small group meetings, and a retreat or town meeting. Some of the consultants interviewed also offered to assist with the implementation of the plan. The timelines proposed range from 4-6 months. Rosina raised the issue of whether we would need to pursue the idea of the charette if we're going to proceed with one of these other consultants.

- Sean: If the strategic planning takes 4-6 months, that will affect the Board's timeline.
- Anyabwile: I think the planning needs to be done within 90 days. We would come out of it with one vision and then we can move forward.

- Lisa: I'm in the middle of strategic planning right now. It's a huge time commitment. There's more going on. I think this Board is fractured. I think we need to deal with that at the same time.
- Pam: I agree with Anyabwile and Lisa. There were things with numbers, etc. because there were things the Facility Committee were dealing with that the Board had not ever grappled with.
- Becky: We need to take the time to do it right.
- Ingrid: Strategic planning is an all-consuming project. I'm not clear how far we're going with this.
- Laval: It's been difficult to get things done, even at retreats. This process will help. I want to engage in discussion that's not at a Board meeting.
- Ryan: I'm ambivalent. I see the need for strategic planning. Six months waiting realistically means three more years here. If we're going to make a commitment to planning, let's make it. I don't think we can do both. Either commit to strategic planning or to finding a facility.
- Nicole: My experience with strategic planning was over a shorter timeframe. We need to run the show----if we need to do it in four months, that's what we should do. We can deal with facility in the beginning of the planning process. There's also a possibility that the building prices will be going down and we could end up making a bad investment at the present time.
- Ryan: At my first Board meeting, I could feel the undercurrent of tension among cliques. Breathing for a while may be a good idea.
- Michelle: I don't want to wait another year. I think the two processes can occur simultaneously.

### **E. Development**

**Ingrid** reported that things are moving along on the committee.

### **F. Discipline**

**Michelle** reported that a new set of policies will be drafted regarding student records.

### **G. Community Relations**

**Susan** clarified that the list of potential people to be invited to the ICS Advisory Board is not meant to be considered in its entirety as wanting to invite all of those people to the Advisory Board. Instead, the committee is asking for permission to start inviting people from the list. Rosina moved the following motion:

*Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves inviting the individuals named on the attached list to join the ICS Advisory Committee.*

Michelle seconded the motion; discussion ensued. Anyabwile asked whether the Advisory Board has been defined. Susan stated that it is

defined in the by-laws and on the ICS website. Michelle asked how it will be decided which ten people to contact first and stated she feels we should be looking for a certain skill set. Nicole stated that if we have to limit the list, why would we include Board members. Pam replied that having some Board members on it helps to better connect the Advisory Board. Nicole moved to amend the motion to rank the individuals in order; that motion was dropped. Susan stated that if people want to add more name, they should contact Joana. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

**Pam** reported that she and Nurse Leslie will be reading a book titled “Chew on This,” which is geared to middle school eating habits. She also reported that Ramzy looked into changing the food vendor, but that will not be practical at this time.

#### **I. Diversity**

**Lisa** reported that the committee hasn’t met recently, but will be organizing an event next year with the theme of “Who’s in Your Neighborhood?” Ryan voiced concern about the lack of racial diversity at events such as PTA meetings and the Silent Auction. Susan suggested making public service announcements at events like Back to School Nights when many parents are in attendance.

#### **J. Policy**

No report.

#### **K. Facility**

Nicole stated that it seems premature to move on the proposed motion about engaging a firm to assist with the charette process, since we are now pursuing strategic planning. The other resolution will be discussed later in the Executive Session.

#### **L. Legal**

No report.

#### **• Other Annual Business: Board Seats**

**Susan** clarified that our by-laws make us hold parent seat elections, even if there is not a contested election. Therefore, we may need to move on the Board seats at another meeting. Pam clarified further that she doesn’t think the by-laws state what kind of election is necessary.

Rosina moved that Anyabwile be nominated for the open Parent seat; Ryan seconded. No other nominations were made; Anyabwile was elected unanimously.

Becky moved to nominate Joana for the vacant Community seat. Ingrid seconded. Susan noted that Caren Seltzer-Devine had submitted her bid

too late for the parent seat; she had been at tonight's meeting, but had to leave early. Sean and Ryan stated they didn't think we should accept late submissions. It was agreed that this will go back to the committee. No vote was taken on this seat.

Rosina moved to nominate Eric, Sean and Laval for Founders' seats; Ryan seconded. Eric, Sean and Laval were elected unanimously.

**VII. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**VIII. New Business**

**Susan** thanked Jurate for a great school year. She also thanked Nicole and Christine for their work. Susan stated it's been an honor to serve. She reminded the Board that this is our meeting; we have a job to do; we're an experiment. She noted that our differences seem to simply be because we see things differently. She also reminded Board members that everyone needs to do their homework. People need to take responsibility for writing and reading reports and asking questions about reports. She stated that she agrees that the Board has tough choices and feels that people seem to simplify things too easily. She noted that she feels she's put some good structure in place over the past year.

**X. Executive Session**

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:42 pm to discuss confidential matters related to real estate negotiations. The Board returned from Executive Session at 11:20 Nicole Moved the following motion: *Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes its officers to submit a letter of intent to 1600 Lombard Associates L.P. 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.* Anyabwile seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**XI. Adjournment**

Nicole moved to adjourn the meeting. Lisa seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:22.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from May 2006 meeting

CEO report

Facility Committee report

Finance Committee minutes

Financial Operations reports (ending 5/31/06)

Proposed Curriculum Specialist Pay Scale

## Proposed Domestic Partners policy

## **Resolutions Passed at this meeting:**

1. Whereas the ICS BOT has previously resolved to make changes to it's health insurance coverage which results in higher co-pays for non-formulary prescription drugs and emergency room visits,

Be it hereby resolved that the ICS BOT approve a health care reimbursement program for returning staff in the 2006-2007 school year. The health care reimbursement program allows staff members to be reimbursed, on a quarterly basis, for the difference between the 2005-2006 co-pays and the 2006-2007 co-pays for non-formulary prescription drugs (\$15) and emergency room visits (\$65). Qualifying staff members will be required to submit receipts and complete appropriate forms, to be developed by the CEO or her delegate, in order to receive the benefit.

2. Be it resolved that the following individuals be offered full time positions as listed for the 2006-2007 school year under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract:

Tabitha DeJesus- Kindergarten FLES  
Randi Harris- Grade 5 Language Arts  
Alvaro Drake-Cortes- Grade 5 Math/Science  
Sara Nissley- Grade 7/8 Language Arts  
Alec Greenwald- Grade 7/8 Social Studies  
Ileana Aguilar- Counselor  
Ericka Morris- Teaching Intern

### **3. DOMESTIC PARTNERS (being re-worked by the Executive Committee)**

4. Be it resolved that Independence Charter School adopt the New York City H.I.V. prevention curriculum.
5. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves inviting the individuals named on the attached list to join the ICS Advisory Committee.
6. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes its officers to submit a letter of intent to 1600 Lombard Associates L.P. 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.