

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
August 9, 2006, 7:00 pm**

**Board Members Present:** Anyabwile Banko'le, Ryan Boyer, Eric Cramer, Joana Davis-Diaz, Sean Hennessy, Rosina Miller, Laval Miller-Wilson, Lisa Nelson-Haynes

**Board Members Absent:** Becky Baehr, Michelle Campbell, Susan Gobreski, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen, Pam Prell, Ingrid Schafroth

**Others Present:** Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Jurate Krokys, Principal/CEO; Karl Olsen, parent; Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Laura Cain, community member.

**I. Call to Order**

**President Rosina Miller** called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated. Anyabwile motioned to accept the minutes. Sean seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

**III. Public Comment Period**

**Rosina** opened the floor to public comment. Laura Cain, a community member who has a pre-school age child, introduced herself. There were no other public comments at this time.

**IV. CEO Report**

**Jurate** highlighted items from the CEO report. She reported that the annual charter school report was submitted on time; the report without attachments was e-mailed to all Board members. Full copies were available at the meeting for review. The third floor renovations are moving along smoothly. She noted that there have been several last minute teacher resignations and that we fortunately had many good candidates continue to be interviewed this summer, so she anticipates being fully staffed well before the start of the school year. She noted that she been asking the exiting teachers to give feedback as to their specific reasons for leaving. She added that this year we are seeing that it is a challenge to continue to be within the allowable range of 25% of teachers who are not yet certified in Pennsylvania. A large percentage of uncertified teachers at ICS are immersion teachers who come from other countries. Likewise, we have several teachers who were certified in other states, but still need to complete the lengthy process of becoming certified in Pennsylvania. Rosina asked what are the consequences if we don't stay within the allowable 25%? Jurate replied that the City has been very supportive. Jerry stated the deadlines keep changing. For example, under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) regulations, all teachers were already to have been "highly qualified," but that has now been extended to the end of this coming school year. He added that the state seems to be giving some leeway, since charter schools are to be experimental. Ryan asked who are the math and science teachers for 8<sup>th</sup> grade? Jurate stated that Katie Connor and Allyson Rourke have been hired for those positions and both have math and

science backgrounds. Jurate noted that it would be great if we can find one additional room to have more space to bring creative ideas to reality. Lisa asked whether all the recent grants have been submitted, because she has a contact person who may be helpful in ICS pursuing one of them; Jurate stated that the grants have been submitted, but some are in the first of several submission phases and asked that Lisa talk with her soon about this potential contact person; Lisa agreed.

**V. PTA Report**

No report.

**VI. Teachers' Report**

No report.

**VII. Committee Reports**

**A. Finance**

**Sean** asked Jerry to explain the details behind proposing resolution #2 on tonight's agenda. Jerry explained that for this year's annual charter school report, the state added a section to submit a year-end financial statement. It appears the state may be attempting to recoup unspent funds, rather than allowing charter schools to accumulate a surplus for later use. Since an accurate end-of-year financial statement cannot be completed until at least 60 days after the end-of-year (in order to allow for finalizing billing, etc), a disclaimer was included with our statement. He added that the Coalition of Charter Schools is encouraging its members to pass similar resolutions and forward them to political representatives. He also noted that the School District's payments have been late two months in a row, when they had previously been very reliable. This does not have a direct effect on an established charter school like ICS, but could have a major impact on some fledgling charter schools. Laval asked whether the Coalition is a Philadelphia group or statewide. Jerry stated that while it's statewide, most of the PA charter schools are in Philadelphia. Jerry noted that the auditors are scheduled to come in the first week of September.

**Sean moved resolution #2; Laval seconded.**

Eric suggested three minor changes: 1)in the fifth section, add the word "potentially" after the word "deadline," 2)also in the fifth section, add the word "possibly" after the word "can," and 3)in the seventh section, change the word "provided" to "provide." The motion passed unanimously with these changes. Rosina asked if there was any objection to Jurate sending this resolution to legislators; there was no objection.

Jerry noted that although the July financial statement looks "tight," that was due to the deposit on the Durham building and that ICS is in good financial shape. He also noted that the School District will adjust the payment for new students in October. Jerry agreed to find out why there is a cost for trash removal, since that is included in our lease. Sean and Jerry explained that to make the deposit on Durham, ICS in essence "loaned" the Worlds of Opportunity Foundation the \$150,000 since Worlds has no money in the bank. Eric stated that a note should be drafted to keep records accurate; Jerry agreed to talk with Eric to ensure that gets written.

**Sean moved to accept the July expenditures as list; Eric seconded.** The motion passed unanimously.

Sean asked Jurate to give some background for resolution #3. Jurate explained that since she is allowed to approve expenditures that are less than \$2,000 when there are adequate funds, she had approved a series of anger management workshops that several of the upper grade boys had requested. However, Jerry pointed out that since a contract was involved, the Board would need to give formal approval before the presenters could be paid.

**Sean moved that resolution #3 be approved; Lisa seconded.** The motion passed unanimously. Laval noted that he would prefer the term “Emotional Management” be used, instead of “Anger Management.”

## **B. Curriculum**

**Pam** was absent, but had circulated her report to the Board before the meeting. Anyabwile gave the following committee report. When Claudia Lee and several other ICS teachers attended an Immersion conference in Minnesota, Maestra Claudia was very impressed with an assessment strategy that was presented. ICS is looking at the possibility of piloting this assessment. He also announced that ecology will be the focus of this year’s Gifted Support program. Jurate added that different grade levels will work on different marketing ideas for various groups----nearby businesses, inside the school, etc. Anyabwile also noted that that there will be draft “homework guidelines,” not a policy, available soon. He also reported that parent Donna Sharer, who also has extensive curriculum experience, stated at the committee meeting her opinion about the need to seriously look at the 5-year gap in salary between ICS and the School District. Rosina added that the HR Committee has already committed to making that a priority in their work this year. Lisa noted that possibly things that were seen as major benefits of working at ICS five years ago may not be what teachers are looking for now. Laval suggested that the teachers be surveyed. Anyabwile suggested that we first do more information gathering. Sean G. said he agreed that trying to have exit interviews would be helpful. Rosina asked that it be clearly noted that the Board feels strongly that a priority this year needs to be to re-address the teacher pay scale and conducting exit interviews. Ryan cautioned that we may be panicking and emphasized that he feels ICS needs to be sure to be highly competitive with other charter schools, not the traditional public schools. Jerry noted that we are also low in comparison to other charter schools. Rosina asked if he could provide a comparison of salary averages and other benefits from different charter schools. Lisa also noted that the move to the Durham building may be a huge move forward in staff morale. Anyabwile asked that we wait to see survey results before deciding priorities. Joana stated that possibly one-year contracts are leading to a feeling of instability. Jurate replied that this year two-year contracts were offered to teachers who are certified and who are in good standing and only a couple requested that type of contract. Laval asked what options ICS has when someone breaks his or her contract. He stated that although he knows we don’t want teachers here who don’t want to be here, we should decide what options we want to build in. Sean G. noted that at a previous school where he worked, the school gave a nominal bonus to teachers who indicated early on whether or not they were returning.

## **C. Human Resources**

**Becky** was absent, but Rosina noted that resolution #1, relating to new hires, is proposed. **Lisa moved the motion; Eric seconded.** Joana asked whether any of those listed are people who have since taken different positions; Jurate stated that was not the case. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. Development**

No report

**E. Community Relations**

**Joana** reported that the committee plans to get together with the Development Committee to plan two kindergarten parent meetings early in the school year. The focus will be on having the grade level become a community. The committee hopes to involve the kindergarten teachers in this effort. She also noted that the committee discussed the hope to continue inviting guests to events such as International Day.

**F. Discipline**

No report.

**G. Healthy Kids**

No report.

**H. Diversity**

No report

**I. Policy**

No report.

**J. Legal**

No report

**K. Facility**

**Nicole** was absent, but Anyabwile stated that the committee has discussed whether we really need an “Owner’s Rep.” It was decided that we need one, but possibly with a smaller role. Ryan stated that he feels it’s redundant to have a construction manager and an owner’s rep. Anyabwile stated that no absolute decision was made and Ryan agreed to attend the next Facility Committee meeting to give his input. Anyabwile also reported that parent/architect Robin Kohles is writing a separate RFP for environmental issues; the committee has already received two unsolicited bids. Rosina noted that Nicole’s report suggested that possibly one of our parent/architects may be able to be the owner’s rep, but not as a volunteer. Laval asked about the timeline. Rosina answered that we should have the first estimates of renovation costs by the third week of October. The timing won’t work for us to get the needed guarantees letter before closing, so we’d have to request a provisional one in the interim. Laval asked whether the Board will be having a special session in October, since the reports won’t be completed in time for the October Board meeting. Rosina replied that we will need to set a date for a special meeting. Joana asked whether anyone is working on the space issue at Liberty Square for the 2007-2008 school year. Rosina replied that we’ve received a lease and it is being reviewed.

**L. Executive**

Rosina reported that strategic planning is moving along. The consultant will attend the first committee meeting on Thursday, August 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss parameters for the interviewing process. The consultant will also be in Philadelphia during the week of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

**VII. Old Business**

None.

**VIII. New Business**

None.

**IX. Adjournment**

Rosina asked for a motion to adjourn. Anyabwile made the motion; Joana seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from July 2006 meeting

CEO report

August Teacher in-service training schedule

Facility Committee report

Finance Committee minutes

Financial Operations report for July 2006

Curriculum Committee report was distributed via e-mail before the meeting, but not at the meeting

**INDEPENDENCE CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Resolutions as Adopted  
August 9, 2006**

**1. New Hires**

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:

Francis "Frank" Brown- Kindergarten FLES  
Martha Curren-Preis- Grade 5 Language Arts  
Odamis Fernandez-Sheinbaum- Grade 4 FLES  
Nabila Sims- NTA  
Christopher White- Computer Science Teacher  
Mary Dougherty- Grade 1 FLES

**2. PA Department of Education Annual Report**

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Education has revised the Annual Report for Charter Schools as of June 20, 2006;

WHEREAS, The Annual Report contains a new reporting requirement entitled Addendum B or "Preliminary Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances" as of June 30, 2006;"

WHEREAS, Addendum B mirrors the already required Annual Financial Report which is due in October;

WHEREAS, the timing for submission of Addendum B requires deviation from Generally Acceptable Accounting Principles/State School Accounting Manual and occurs before the schools receive and digest their independent financial audits;

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that missing the August 1<sup>st</sup> deadline potentially subjects the school to fines and penalties and can possibly be construed as a material violation of the Charter;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School objects to the change in the Annual Report requiring submission of Addendum B.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Independence Charter School will comply with the requirement for filing the Annual Report as required by law but does so reserving its objections since the information contained in Addendum B violates the State School Accounting Manual; requires duplicative effort encompassed by the Annual Financial Report; and requires the Charter School to provide incomplete, and therefore inaccurate, information to the Department of Education, the chartering school district and the public.

Resolved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006  
INDEPENDENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

**3. Lessons In Freedom and Empowerment Contract**

So be it resolve that the ICS BOT authorizes its officers and CEO to enter into an agreement with Lessons In Freedom and Empowerment to conduct anger management workshops for ICS students during the 2005-2006 school year for a cost not to exceed \$1,000.