

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
September 13, 2006, 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Becky Baehr, Anyabwile Banko'le, Joana Davis-Diaz, Susan Gobreski, Sean Hennessy, Rosina Miller, Laval Miller-Wilson, Lisa Nelson-Haynes, Nicole Perkins Kilcullen, Pam Prell

Board Members Absent: Ryan Boyer, Michelle Campbell, Eric Cramer

Others Present: Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Jurate Krokys, Principal/CEO; Jerry Santilli, Santilli and Thomson; Ramzy Andrawos,, Operations Manager; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Amy Leigh, Tienne Martin, Andrea Yanez, teachers; Fran Melmed, Karl Olsen, Cristina Vea, David Webber, parents.

I. Call to Order

President Rosina Miller called the meeting to order at 7:11 pm.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the last Board meeting were circulated.

Anyabwile motioned to accept the minutes. Sean H. seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

III. Public Comment Period

Rosina opened the floor to public comment. There were no public comments at this time.

IV. CEO Report

Jurate highlighted items from the CEO report. She noted that we're still working on bus problems and are waiting to hear back from the bus company, Yellowbird, about a date to meet in person. She also summarized the PSSA test score sheet that was in the meeting packet, noting that ICS students continue to do well. She pointed out that ICS, as well as many schools, had no one scoring in the advanced range in writing. She explained that this test was in an experimental stage and that this will be discussed at an incoming Professional Development day. Jurate gave an update on grant writing, reporting that she is working on a proposal to the Lenfest Foundation; the request will be for funds towards the ICS computer science and technology work that is already underway.

Lisa asked whether it would be possible to have a police officer available for traffic at dismissal time. Cristina stated that she had tried to contact the AAA, which reportedly has a crossing guard program. She offered to try again if there was enough interest. Susan also offered to sit down with the police and other parties sometime after the first week in November.

V. PTA Report

Cristina reported that all teachers were given a school readiness gift from the PTA. The Scholastic Book Fair will take place next week. The breakfast for kindergarten parents was a success, especially with having the Principal and others speak to the group. The Land's End logo catalogues have been

distributed; Pam suggested sending out an e-mail when Land's End actually has the logo on file as to not frustrate parents. Cristina noted that the PTA will partially fund the yoga program this year. The PTA will be holding a membership drive during the Back-to-School Nights next week. Cristina stated that the PTA has been receiving questions as to what is being done about the bus problems and that she was glad to hear that a meeting is being planned. Susan suggested that we might want to start a listserv for bus problems, so that affected families could receive current information on a day that a problem is occurring.

VI. Teachers' Report

Amy reported that the staff really likes having the second staff bathroom on the second floor. She stated that a new "Green Committee" has formed among the teachers and that they're hoping to set up recycling containers. Susan offered to help with this effort after the first week in November. Amy noted that there seems to be a general energy and positivity about the school. She and Tienne asked what the Board would like from the Teacher's Report. Rosina stated that this is a place for communication and expression and for the teachers to take Board issues back to the teachers. Susan added that it can also help get conversations started. Pam noted that she feels it's important for the teachers to "ground" the Board. Becky stated that she likes hearing reports on what creative projects are happening in the classroom.

VII. Committee Reports

Rosina reminded the Board to include the teacher reps when e-mailing, etc and to be sure to post committee meeting reminders and agendas to the ICS school-wide e-mail address: all_staff@independencecharter.org, as well as to the ICSInfo group on Yahoo. Susan reminded everyone that you can schedule recurring meetings, so that reminders are sent monthly for regularly scheduled meetings. Rosina asked that the Community Relations Committee work on the scheduling issues.

A. Community Relations

Joana introduced Fran Melmed who reviewed the results of the 2006 Parent Survey; a copy of the PowerPoint presentation was distributed with the Board packet. Fran reported that the Committee will move forward with delving deeper into some questions raised by the survey. Overall, she emphasized that parents seem very happy with the school and that even in areas of concern, there was always just a small number of families who had concerns. Jurate also stated that the Board needs to be firm about areas that they are absolutely staying with, noting that there will always be some areas in which people won't agree with some decisions made by the Board and school administrators. Jurate also noted that she was glad to see that of the parents who responded, there seemed to be a fairly equal representation of FLES and Immersion parents, as well as a good racial mix. Fran stated that the overall response rate was lower than the Committee would have liked and that one suggestion for an improved response rate next year is to also offer it on-line. She further noted that both Immersion and FLES parents gave the highest ratings to the ICS Reading program. Communication was ranked lowest by both groups of parents. Similarly, the "balance" programs (FLES-Spanish for those in the FLES program and English for the Immersion program) were also an area of lower rating. Fran asked for

reactions to this finding in particular. Jurate stated she didn't find it surprising, since those are two outlying programs. Pam stated that the finding is probably somewhat skewed, since the K-2 Immersion students don't get English at all, which is the way the program was developed. Fran noted that it's possible that parents don't all understand what we're trying to do with Immersion. Susan stated that we need to better articulate our goals. Lisa stated that we may need to look more closely at the question, since when the survey was conducted, it was near the time when 1st graders were being tested for the first time, and so English may have been more on the parents' mind. Rosina suggested that the Curriculum Committee develop a handout about how the Immersion program is structured; this could also be posted on the website. Jurate stated that something like that is being included in this year's parent handbook. Nicole cautioned that we want to be sure to only be putting out information that we've all agreed on as to not set something in stone. Pam suggested describing this year's schedule. Susan noted that we need to be careful that people understand what is fact and what is "as it is now." Fran closed by stating that overall, all parents are delighted. Three areas of concern were computers, busing and the website, all of which are currently being actively addressed. Rosina thanked Fran for her work and suggested that the Community Relations Committee might want to schedule some open forums to talk about what the 2007 survey should look like. Pam stated that this survey is really good news and that we should look at it within our strategic planning, always asking: "What's best for the kids?" Lisa suggested having multiple methods of surveying to get a wider range of input---paper survey, web survey, phone surveys and focus groups.

B. Finance

Lisa reported that the audit results were e-mailed to Board members. Jerry reminded the Board that it's recommended that each Board has an Audit Committee, separate from the Finance Committee, that meets with the auditors before the audit starts. He stated that 90% of charter schools that fail, fail for financial, not academic, reasons. Jerry stated that it is also recommended to change auditors every five years. Last year, the Board decided to use the same auditors for a sixth year due to needing continuity for bond issues. Next year, the Board is looking at getting a new auditor, who can provide a fresh perspective. Susan asked whether a group of Board members should meet with the auditors to review the results. Jerry said that would be a good idea. Jerry stated that page one of the audit is always the most important; that page notes whether or not the audit "report presents fairly" or not. The ICS report met this standard. He noted that in addition to financial records, auditors now look at personnel and student records.

Jerry reviewed the August financial statement and noted that we'll be getting more funds after November when the new students are added to our rolls. He also noted that the School District funds are now arriving on time again. He stated that there is a discrepancy in the cost of some of the textbooks, since some prices increased by the time the books were ordered. He also gave clarification as to how the school qualifies for IDEA funds, which are part of the funding for No Child Left Behind. He stated these are based on free and reduced priced meal eligibility, which is based on the School District's numbers, and students scoring "not proficient" on testing. If/when the percentage of qualified students drops, we can only spend these funds on those children.

Sean Hennessy moved agenda resolution #1, regarding recurring expenses for the 2006-2007 school year. Becky seconded the motion. There was no discussion; the motion passed unanimously.

Sean Hennessy then moved agenda resolution #2, regarding a change to the bylaws. Sean clarified that our decision last year regarding purchasing was inconsistent with our bylaws. This resolution is being proposed to make the bylaws consistent with that policy. Susan noted that some people feel any agreement is a contract, but that the Board agreed that for our purposes a contract is more than an on-going agreement than a purchase. She stated that she would feel more comfortable changing the purchasing decision. Sean H. stated that would mean that even small contracts would need to come before the Board and that if we want to do that, then it would make for sense for all contracts to need Board approval. Becky suggested changing the language to say, "making purchases," instead of "entering into contract." Susan suggested adding a purchasing policy to the bylaws and to keep contracts separate. She added that the Board needs to keep close watch on contracts and anything else that obligates the Board. She recommended that the Legal Committee work on the contract policy. Sean H. stated he felt the issue should go to the Executive Committee. Rosina asked why the Executive Committee would be reviewing it, since it was already approved. Pam suggested that the motion be tabled. Rosina stated that the Executive Committee will look at this and will ask the Legal Committee for input. Nicole noted that the YET grant is an example of Jurate doing what the Board requested, which was bringing the issue to the Board before submitting the grant proposal. She stated that now that we've gotten the grant, we should not be questioning it, but go forward with it. Susan stated that we can't confuse trust and philosophy and that she feels we need a process to review these things. Becky stated that we need a development person to keep track of grants.

C. Curriculum

Pam reported that several copies of the draft curriculum were circulated and to let her know if you want another copy to review. Currently the format is subject by subject; the final draft will have a standard, integrated format. She reminded the Board that this year is for editing the draft and that any suggestions should be sent to her and Teacher Kristen Long. Over the next few months, the Music and Dance/Movement plans will be added. The Curriculum Committee is going to try to look at grant opportunities at each meeting. Susan asked what the status is of the homework guidelines. Pam said Jurate will be discussing them at Back-to-School Nights. Susan asked how the topic for this year's Gifted Support program was chosen without Board approval. Pam stated that the Curriculum Committee presented this possibility at last month's Board meeting and there were no objections. Jurate added that traditionally the GS program has been a vehicle for skill building; Pam added that it is not a piecemeal process.

D. Human Resources

Becky stated there was no meeting in August. She reported that we need to look at how we're going to be able to raise the pay scale for teachers. Work is being done on updating the Employee Handbook to include resolutions passed since the document was written. She also reported that as of April 1, 2007 all school staff will be required to have an FBI fingerprint clearance done. This can be costly,

since you need to pay to have fingerprints done and then pay \$24 to have them processed.

Becky moved agenda resolution #3, regarding hiring. Sean H. seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Becky moved agenda resolution #4, regarding Anne Hall's FMLA leave; she explained that Jerry had stated the Board needs to pass resolutions regarding employee leave requests. Nicole seconded. It was agreed to take out the phrase "under the Family Medical Leave Act;" the motion passed unanimously with this change. Joana asked what happens when Anne comes back. Jurate stated that we have always been planning for 1.5 counselors, even before Anne requested leave. Joana asked for clarification regarding our having 1.5 nurses. Jurate clarified that we have the equivalent of one nurse, with Nurse Leslie and Nurse Tamara splitting the days.

E. Development

Laval announced that he is the new chairperson of this committee and that he is working to set up regular meeting dates. He stated that he feels it's important to understand this Committee's relationship with other committees. Further he said he wants to better understand how PTA fundraising "competes" and relates with the Development Committee. Finally, he stated that ICS will outsource for capital campaign fundraising.

F. Discipline

No report.

G. Healthy Kids

Pam announced that this committee will meet at least twice a year. Susan volunteered to work on this committee.

H. Diversity

No report

I. Policy

No report.

J. Legal

No report

K. Facility

Nicole reported that the committee did not meet this month and that the architects have almost completed their work on Phase One of the feasibility study on the Durham building site. Preliminarily, it looks like it's going to be more expensive than planned. One question is whether or not the work will be subject to public bidding. If we do not have to do that, we'll save an estimated \$1-1.5million. There is also a possibility of phasing in the move in to save costs-----for example, moving in a significant group of students in September 2007. That way the debt doesn't start until the project is complete. We will need to have some special Board meetings to discuss details, one to hear a presentation from the architects and our lawyer as to what is required during the "due diligence" period and the

other to decide whether or not to move forward. Members of the Committee are meeting with the architects tomorrow. Nicole reminded everyone that ICS inherited the 12/1/06 closing date and that we're eligible for a bridge loan to allow us to go to closing. However, zoning approval is needed for that. If that doesn't happen, we either can't go to closing, or the School District will need to extend the closing date. A tentative Special Meeting date was set for September 27th at 6:30p.m. Nicole will check to make sure the architects are available. The first meeting at 6:30 would be for Board members only for the purpose of receiving the report from the architects. The second meeting, a Special Board Meeting where discussion will take place, would start at 8p.m. and would be open to the public. Laval stated that it seems that will leave us with a lot of information to discuss at the October Board meeting. It was agreed that a tentative October Special Meeting date to decide on whether to move forward from the "due diligence" phase would be Wednesday, October 25th.

L. Executive

Rosina reported that the strategic planning process is moving along. The retreat has tentatively been scheduled for Friday, November 17th from 9-5 and Saturday, November 18th from 9-3. Rosina will forward the Committee minutes to the Board.

VIII. Old Business

None.

IX. New Business

None.

X. Executive Session

The Board went into Executive Session at 10:42 P.M. to discuss the CEO contract. The Board returned from Executive Session at 10:48 P.M. Becky moved Agenda resolution #5. Pam seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. Adjournment

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda

Minutes from August 2006 meeting

CEO report

Finance Committee minutes

Financial Operations report for August 2006

Human Resources report

Independence Charter School Board of Trustees Meeting
September 13, 2006 7 PM
Resolutions

1. Recurring Expense Resolution

Be it resolved that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School approve the following recurring payments and contracts for the school year 2006-2007:

Vendor	Services	Rate	Not to Exceed Annually
LA Liberty Squares	Electric	N/A	\$75,096
Larry Taylor, Ed.D.	Psych Serv.	\$100 per hour	\$20,000
Pediatric Therapeutic Svs.	Speech	\$67 per hour	\$30,000
Pediatric Therapeutic Svs	OT;PT	\$65 per hour	\$10,000
Robb Quattro	Computer Svs.	\$75 per hour	\$5,000
Verizon	Tele/Internet	N/A	\$10,000
Appleheart	Medical Svs	N/A	\$550

2. Hiring Resolution

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:

Arlene Ortiz - Upper Grade FLES (Spanish)
 Monica Kriso – Kindergarten FLES
 Kristen Denahan - Counselor

4. FMLA Resolution

Be it resolved that the ICS Board of Trustees approve Anne Hall’s request to take an unpaid leave of absence until January 2, 2007.

5. CEO Employment Contract

Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees enter into the attached agreement for employment with Jurate Krokys, which re-appoints Ms.Krokys to the position of Chief Operating Officer of ICS. Compensation and other benefits are defined by the terms of the agreement. The agreement shall remain in effect through July 15, 2008.

