

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting
February 14, 2007 7:00 pm**

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

Board Members Absent: Michelle Campbell, Eric Cramer

Others Present: Sean Gallagher, Vice Principal; Jurate Krokys, Principal/CEO; Jerry Santilli (by phone), Santilli and Thomson; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Amy Leigh, ICS teacher; Robin Kohles, Ken Roscioli & Cristina Vea, parents; Joel Bradshaw, Strategic Planning Consultant.

I. Call to Order

President Rosina Miller called the meeting to order at 7:06pm. She explained that due to today's icy weather, many of the Board members would be calling into the meeting rather than being there in person.

II. Approval of Minutes

Rosina asked if there were any changes to be made to the January minutes that were circulated; Nicole clarified that the minutes distributed this evening included the revisions made to the earlier draft. Sean motioned to accept the minutes; Nicole seconded. The minutes were approved.

III. CEO Report

Jurate reported that the visit by the potential collaboration between ICS and the Spanish Embassy is very exciting; it may include teacher training, their providing some classroom teachers, a lending library and much more. No one had any questions about the report.

IV. PTA Report

Cristina reported that the February meeting was very informative; Vice Principal Sean spoke to the group regarding the various academic supports ICS has in place and will be putting in place for students who need extra help. She also reported that attendance at the adult Spanish classes has been very good and that a Corbi sale will be happening before the end of the school year. The PTA plans to coordinate with the Development Committee to work on scheduling fundraising events to avoid events that might conflict or compete with each other; for instance, the PTA is requesting that the Development Committee hold its fundraising dinner before the PTA Silent Auction takes place in May. The PTA has set aside \$300 per class; requests of under \$200 will be reviewed by the PTA executive committee; those over \$200 will be reviewed at a regular PTA meeting. Cristina also said that the PTA has discussed whether the music program may need some new instruments and whether or not funding may be needed for a middle school art teacher. Pr. Jurate agreed that both were great possibilities; Pam agreed to invite Cristina to the next Curriculum Committee meeting to discuss this further.

V. Development Committee

Due to Laval having to call in to this meeting and possibly not being able to be on the phone for the whole meeting, Rosina proposed moving his committee report and resolution up on the agenda; there were no objections. **Laval** reported

that the Fairmount Ventures presentation was been postponed to the March Board meeting, so that everyone will have the opportunity to be present. He reported that the committee interviewed three consulting firms and felt Fairmount Ventures best meets the needs to ICS; the group has worked successfully with Wissahickon Charter School and seems to have creative ideas about enhancing revenue. If ICS proceeds with them, their plan is to develop a fundraising plan as well as conducting a feasibility study. The process will take about 12 weeks. The goal of the committee is to recommend a plan to the Board for possible adoption at the June 2007 Board meeting. Ryan asked whether there will be a termination clause in the contract---in case the consultant does not meet the goals. Laval stated that the payment would be in installments and that the Development Committee will be holding the consultant accountable every step of the way. Laval also stated that the Board members will be held accountable for fundraising also. Sean moved the motion regarding contracting with Fairmount Ventures; Nicole seconded. Susan abstained from voting; Ryan voted against it; everyone else voted for it. The motion carried. Susan suggested that if we want a clause in the contract to be able to stop payment if the goals aren't being met, than we need to add such a clause; Sean suggested that Laval forward the contract to Michelle, who can work with our attorney Terry Henry to work on the contract. Sean also asked Jerry whether any of his schools has had Fairmount Ventures work for them; Jerry said they had not.

VI. Teacher Reports

Amy reported that this is a particularly busy time of the school year. The Spelling Bees, Science Fair and 5th & 8th grade PSSA writing testing are all taking place this month; teachers are also incorporating PSSA test prep into the curriculum in order for students to be prepared for the testing in the spring. She reported that the prospective teacher open houses have been a nice way for current ICS teachers to participate in the new teacher selection process. Pr. Jurate added that she is forming a teacher focus group to discuss the ICS benefit package in order to inform the teacher pay scale discussion.

VII. Committee Reports

A. Finance

Sean asked Jerry to review the financial report. Jerry stated that ICS is in a comfortable cash flow position. He also cautioned that the December financials do not reflect the budget revisions that will be discussed tonight. He also pointed out that line #5 reflects a January payment from the school district that was made in December (a few weeks early). There were no questions from the Board regarding the December financial report. Jerry reviewed the budget adjustment sheets and reminded the Board that we now review budget adjustments on a quarterly basis; so this is the second review for this fiscal year. He noted that the changes in the special education area are due to having more children enrolled in Special Education than originally budgeted. Susan asked for clarification about the loan payments to Citizens Alliance. Jerry clarified that the loan was renegotiated, so that there are no principal payments made during the school year, but that a balloon payment is due at the end; this will result in saving some money on interest payments. Susan also asked for clarification about the changes in contracted services. Jerry and Laval explained that since we had budgeted for a Development Director, but then realized we wouldn't be hiring for that position this year, we knew we had some resources to spend on a Development Assistant, as well as having funds that could be used for the fundraising consultant. Rosina suggested this would be an appropriate time for Sean to move the Finance Committee motions. Sean moved the resolution regarding the budget adjustments; Ryan seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Sean then

moved the motion to accept the December expenditure report; Susan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Development

This report was given earlier in the meeting.

C. Curriculum

Pam reported that since she knew she'd be reporting via phone tonight, she circulated an e-mail earlier regarding the rationale behind tonight's Curriculum Task Force Schedule resolution. Susan stated that she thought the full Board was going to have a chance to discuss how this year's 5th grade immersion model has been working before a recommendation would be made as to whether or not to continue it for next year. Pam stated that the issue is a little touchy for a full Board meeting, since making any major changes would necessarily involve staff changes, so it borders on being a confidential Human Resources situation. Pam stated that the 5th grade immersion students get about 50% Spanish and 50% English instruction, having two subjects (Science and Math) taught in Spanish and that the teachers and administrative staff feel this model is working well. The 5th graders also have a strong social studies and language arts team. In the afternoon, the FLES and Immersion students are blended for language arts and social studies. The hope for next year is to have two Spanish homeroom teachers. Pam asked Susan whether she was thinking that possibly we should switch to have language arts and social studies taught in Spanish, instead of Science and Math. Susan replied that she didn't have any particular suggestions, but just thought the Board would have more time to review what worked and what didn't. Ryan stated that he agreed with Susan. Pam stated that there is no resolution currently on the table regarding the 5th grade model. Rosina requested that the Curriculum Committee give a presentation at the March meeting; Pam asked the Board members to send specific questions to Pam as soon as possible, since she will most likely need to ask Tr. Kristen Long and M. Claudia to prepare the information. Nicole suggested that the committee also review the minutes from last year when the 5th grade immersion plans were discussed. Pr. Jurate also suggested that Board members come to observe the fifth grade immersion class to get a better sense of how the immersion component is working.

Ryan moved the resolution regarding a pilot program for Japanese; Anyabwile seconded. Pam clarified that Japanese culture holds a lot of interest for students of middle school age. Ryan stated he feels another language is a good idea, but asked why we weren't considering Chinese, instead of Japanese. Pam replied that it was decided that Chinese is an extremely difficult language to learn; Susan added that the characters are the same in both languages, so Japanese may be a good start in an effort to eventually learn Chinese. A roll call vote was taken. Lisa, Sean and Joana abstained; everyone else voted for the motion. The motion passed.

Sean moved the motion regarding the curriculum task force schedule; Anyabwile seconded. Ryan asked who comprised the task force. Pam explained that's it's mostly a sub committee of the Curriculum Committee and that she has been trying to recruit more Board members for it over the past few meetings. Sean asked whether the middle school curriculum is likely to look significantly different if we eventually voted to have just one program. Pam stated that at this point, we have no idea whether or not it would look different. Jurate clarified that whether we have one or two programs is interconnected to the strength of the program. Pam added that before we decide whether to go with just one program, we should figure out whether we've done our best with two programs. Becky

asked whether this resolution means we're deciding to just look at one thing or another. Pam clarified that resolution came about because of the goals set forth in the draft strategic plan, which makes it clear that the short-term is three years. She added that there is no way the committee can do an adequate job looking at them all at once. Becky stated that it seems the strategic plan can't be complete until we know whether we'll have one or two programs. Susan suggested that the resolution be withdrawn. Pam replied that her committee needs the decision sooner, since according to the draft strategic plan the committee's timeline started in January 2007 with a June 2007 deadline. Nicole asked whether there are specific middle school problems that need to be worked on or is this just an effort for continuous improvement. Pam stated that the hope would be to have a specific sub committee to review the middle school. Susan stated that if the committee needs the Board to direct the committee to look at the middle school before the issue of one or two program, the Board can do that. Anyabwile asked for clarification as to if we vote yes to this resolution, we're saying the Curriculum Committee can only work on the question of whether we should have one or two programs. Pam stated that is not the case. This resolution is just for the Task Force. The other work of the Curriculum Committee would continue. Rosina called for a vote. Lisa, Ryan, Susan, Laval, and Rosina voted no; Pam and Nicole abstained; Sean, Anyabwile, Becky and Joana voted yes. Michelle was not on the phone at the time of the vote. The motion did not pass.

Pam clarified that the committee needs the Board to direct the committee to prioritize. Joel clarified that the draft of the strategic plan is in the process of being revised and suggested that people put their ideas in the revision process. Nicole asked if the Task Force may need to be under the Board, instead of the Curriculum Committee. Susan stated that she feels this is a strategic plan item and that it seems the committee has punted it to the full Board. Pam clarified that the committee did not punt it, but that this is a Task Force concern. Ryan stated that a close vote is still a vote; Anyabwile added that we didn't vote never to discuss this again. Becky stated that she thought we had passed a similar resolution a while ago. Pam stated that no similar resolution has been passed and that Pam has just been updating the Board on the Task Force. Rosina asked that we move on this item through the strategic plan process.

D. Human Resources

Becky reported that a draft pay scale was submitted to Jerry and the Finance Committee; when Jerry calculated the numbers, the plan was a 14% increase in the Human Resources budget. We are in the process of re-working the draft. Becky agreed to e-mail a copy of the draft to the whole Board and reminded everyone that this needs to be finalized by the March meeting for budget purposes. Rosina requested that the HR Committee circulate a comparison sheet of the current pay scale and the proposed one; Becky agreed to do that. Rosina reminded everyone to get their comments to Becky in a timely manner. Susan clarified that the members of the HR Committee are Becky, Michelle, Pam and Susan. Lisa asked what a realistic increase would be. Jurate replied that based on the annual anticipated per student increase, that would be 3%. Becky added that we also need to look at what we value and whether some other items can be reallocated. Sean stated that he agrees with Becky and that if we make it a one-time increase, he feels we can rearrange other things to make it work. The next HR meeting will be Friday morning at 9a.m.

E. Policy

Rosina stated that the Policy Committee had no report this month, but that Susan had requested to speak. Susan reported that the Committee meets on the fourth

Friday of the month and that the Committee is waiting for input regarding Board Committee responsibilities.

F. Facility

Nicole reported that she was unable to attend the last committee meeting due to illness and that the minutes were circulated. More facility information will be included in the Executive Committee report.

G. Executive

Rosina welcomed Strategic Planning Consultant Joel Bradshaw and asked him to give an update on that process. Joel reported that the Planning Committee met once after the retreat to revise the first draft of the plan; the revised draft has now been distributed to the Board and everyone else who participated in the retreat. He reminded everyone that comments are due by this Friday, February 16th and that the goal is for the Planning Committee to meet once more before the March Board meeting, so that a newly revised draft plan will be available to be discussed at the March Board meeting.

Rosina reported that in recent meetings with representatives from CHAD, we've been looking at a long-term vision for two schools (CHAD and ICS) in one building. We will be starting a joint building task force to design a master plan to meet the needs of both schools; there will be an equal number of representatives from both schools on the task force. Some ideas include a sixth floor gym with another half gym and play yard on top of that.

In the short-term, Rosina reported that we are moving forward on a condominium arrangement that would include one room of the first floor gallery space. We are currently negotiating a square foot price. If it goes forward, the condo agreement would not go into effect until the 2008-2009 school years. CHAD is currently looking for two more rooms for us to use for the 2007-2008 school year. Nicole added that future plans could include things like sharing a kitchen with separate lunch rooms on either side of the kitchen. Ryan asked whether ICS could be on the first and second floors for next year. Rosina stated that we would not be there until the 2008-2009 school year. Ryan asked about the status of Landmark. Rosina stated that while CHAD hasn't yet spoken with Landmark, there is the possibility of a lease buy out. Lisa asked whether ICS would need to contribute to a buy out; Rosina stated we're not that far along in this process to be discussing that yet. She added that another possibility is a CHAD "build out," in which more space could be added to the fifth floor. Lisa asked whether building up is even a possibility due to federal air rights. Nicole stated that we will double-check, but initial inquiries had led us to believe that this is possible. Lisa stated that she is also interested in the spirit of collaboration, because she prefers that ICS students have as little interaction as possible with CHAD students. Rosina replied that is something to be discussed down the line and which can be negotiated. Jurate stated that Landmark has a least to 2010 and two five year lease extensions after that and cautioned that even though CHAD had agreed to start talking with Landmark, they have not done so. She added that her fear is that could mean ICS can't move to the first and second floors for more than one year and that it seems we're getting way ahead of ourselves to already be talking about possible shared kitchen space. She stated that these are great ideas, but not anything that's been moved on. Ryan asked whether we shouldn't be going through a due diligence process on this space as we did with the Durham location to find out what we'd be getting into. Susan agreed that we need to know what is being guaranteed. Rosina added that although CHAD hasn't approached

Landmark yet, that seems understandable, since they do not have an agreement from us yet.

Robin (Kohl's) stated that this evening several ICS representatives walked through CHAD before this meeting. Since then she has been looking at the initial drawings and she feels we need to re-look at them since there don't seem to be as many rooms as originally thought. Rosina asked that the Facilities Committee revisit the drawings. She then gave the floor to Nicole to give an update on the parent group meeting that took place earlier this week.

Nicole stated that Michelle had approached the Board, asking them to hear from a group of parents as to how the Durham site might work for ICS. The Executive Committee agreed to invite the Board to meet with this parent group on Monday night. The group had looked at the Durham plans and found that by reducing stairway space and moving an elevator, we could add four smaller rooms in the addition area. The Schrader architects agreed that this could work, but weren't wildly enthusiastic because it is squeezing even more into the same space and still does not meet the full core program requirements. The parent group has asked that the Board apply political pressure, since the timing is good now with the Democratic mayoral primary approaching. The group suggests pressuring to get the purchase price reduced by \$5 million. Rosina stated that after meeting with the School District, ICS has already sent two letters which have been unanswered. Ryan asked whether if we are successful in getting the price reduced by \$5 million, are we going forward with Durham? He added that he thought the Board already made a decision not to go forward with Durham and that it doesn't seem right that a special meeting was granted, but added that he can't blame the parent group for their efforts, since it's clear that this Board often waffles on decisions. Nicole stated that she agrees with Ryan about the process and feels the group should have gone through the Board committee process. She added though that as the chair of the Facilities Committee, she is willing to do what she can to act on the group's suggestions. Anyabwile stated that he doesn't feel that Michelle drove this process. He stated that several parents also contacted him and that he did not understand the Board's vote as meaning we were no longer pursuing Durham, but rather that it was a matter of money. Lisa stated she agrees with Anyabwile and with Ryan. She added that the Board voted a while ago not to stay in our current location, yet we're once again considering that. She stated that it's ridiculous to not expect parents to use their energy this way.

Susan stated that she feels the Board is willing to keep an open mind; however, the parent group lobbied to get special access to be heard, which others didn't get to lobby their side. She added that if we're going to have a debate, it needs to be on merit. Nicole stated that the parent group had been meeting for four weeks alone rather than through the appropriate committees where they could have cultivated an action plan and resolution to present tonight, and that now we're in a crunch situation. She added that her recommendation is to send this issue back to Board committees on an expedited basis. Susan stated that she was at Monday's meeting and that it didn't seem that anything was different. Jurate stated that the Board saw worth and value in the Durham site or would never have started looking at it. She added that people need to know what the bottom line is. If the price is reduced by \$5 million, are we going for it? Rosina stated that we have spent time trying to get the price lowered, construction cost lowered, etc. She added that two weeks from tonight we're supposed to close or default on Durham. She stated that the Executive Committee felt comfortable with going forward with Durham if the price is reduced by \$5 million. She asked

to take a straw poll to find out who the Board currently feels about that; Susan added that it would need to be \$5 million of new money that couldn't be applied to anything else. Nicole, Ryan, Anyabwile, Becky, Pam, Lisa and Rosina voted yes; Susan voted no. Joana and Laval were not on the phone during the poll.

Ryan clarified that this means that if we get the \$5 million, we need to say we're ready to move there. Jurate added that after the December meeting, the Executive Committee gave her permission to meet with foundations, etc. in regard to this and that those meetings have been occurring. Ryan added that we should ask the School District to extend the closing deadline. Sean suggested having one lead person on the political front. Ryan agreed to organize that effort. Anyabwile volunteered to assist. Rosina suggested also getting some of the parents who presented at Monday's meeting to participate. Sean stated that if we're going to ask the School District for a closing extension, we'd need to give a good reason. Cristina (Vea) stated she feels it would look good to ask for an extension, as opposed to letting the deadline pass. Robin suggested folding in the Development Committee plans into the explanation. Becky reminded that group that we also have a CHAD deadline nearing. Rosina stated she feels the CHAD deadline is somewhat flexible. Anyabwile stated that by at least going through this process, everyone will feel we made the best attempt.

VII. Old Business

All of the Old Business resolutions were considered earlier in the meeting.

VII. New Business

Sean moved the resolution regarding computer purchase; Ryan seconded. The motion passed.

Ryan moved the HR resolution regarding terminating employee agreements; Anyabwile seconded. The motion passed.

Anyabwile moved the resolution regarding hiring Bernadette Parker; Sean seconded. The motion passed.

Sean moved the resolution regarding transitioning Tr. Ericka Morris to a first grade teaching position; Ryan seconded. Susan asked whether Tr. Ericka is certified. Jurate stated that she is not yet certified, but will be by June. The motion passed.

IX. Public Comment Period

Rosina opened the floor for public comments. There were no comments.

X. Adjournment

Ryan moved for adjournment; Sean seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Handouts circulated at this meeting:

Agenda
Minutes from the January 2007 meeting
CEO report
Curriculum Committee minutes
Development Committee minutes
Finance Committee minutes
Facility Report
December financial report
Human Resources Committee report

**Independence Charter School Board of Trustees Meeting
February 14, 2007 7 PM**

Resolutions Passed

Expenditures Approval

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes December expenditures in the amount of \$170,043.57 as presented in the attachment.

Revised Budget Adoption

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the attached budget revision for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

Resource Development Plan

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes its President to enter into an agreement with Fairmount Ventures, Inc. to develop a resource development plan that sets fundraising goals and outlines a specific course of action for the school for both its operating and capital needs for an amount not to exceed \$20,000 plus expenses for charges associated with photocopying, express mail, postage, local travel, and phone calls.

Japanese Class

Be it resolved that the staff, with the support of the Curriculum and Human Resource committees, seek to implement a Pilot Japanese Language program for the 6th grade for the 2007-2008 school year.

Computer Purchase

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes purchase of 29 Dell Latitude laptops and 1 HP Compaq Tablet PC for an amount not to exceed \$28,000.

HR Resolutions

Be it resolved that the ICS Board of Trustees acknowledges the termination of the following 2006-2007 employee agreements: Claire Grillo and Mary Dougherty, grade 1 FLES teachers.

Be it resolved that Bernadette Parker be offered a full-time position, as a first grade teacher, for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract.

Be it resolved that Ericka Morris be transitioned from a Teaching Intern to the position of first grade teacher for the remainder of the 2006-2007 school year under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract.

Resolutions Tabled or Defeated

Curriculum Task Force Schedule

In compliance with the schedule of short term goals as developed in the Strategic Plan, be it resolved that a Task Force begin researching foreign language programs and the ICS Spanish language program (currently both Immersion and FLES) to support the adoption of an optimal model for students to be enrolled in the future. This model and timeline for implementation will be adopted at the June 2007 meeting of the Board of Trustees. During the 2007-2008 school year, the Middle School will be evaluated for the adoption of a model program. During the 2008-2009 school year an evaluation and adoption of a model World Cultures Curriculum will take place.