

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2015 6p.m.**

Board Members Present: Rashidah Andrews, George Awad, Mike Barsanti, Brigitte Daniel (via phone), Barbara Dundon, John Eagen, Susanna Greenberg, Tre Johnson, Krista Pfeiffer, Gloria Shabazz, Sheila Simmons, Elsie Stern, Claiborne Taylor, Gregory Turlington, Dana Twyman

Board Member(s) Absent: Rebecca Clothey

Others Present: Thomas Scheid, CEO; Kristen Long, Middle School Principal; Kareem Thomas, Lower School Principal; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Amy Leigh, Staff Representative; Cody Smith, IT Helpdesk Assistant; Jerry Santilli, Business Manager; Michael Danyo, Santilli & Thomson associate; Sekou Campbell, parent; Ebru Erkut, parent; Jenny Hoedeman-Eiteljorg, Family & Community Partnerships Liaison; Megan Steelman, Compliance Manager

Call to Order

Gloria called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and explained that the board members will go into an executive session for about 20 minutes to discuss confidential matters.

Executive Session

The board members returned from the executive session at 6:47p.m.

Approval of Minutes

John moved to accept the December meeting minutes, George seconded. Elsie and Claiborne abstained; the motion passed. John moved the February 5th Special Meeting minutes; Susanna seconded. Elsie and Claiborne abstained. The motion passed.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Finance Report

Mike reviewed the financials. Mike explained that the PSERS liability is due to making quarterly PSERS pension payments. He stated that our net income is consistent with the budget. He noted that line 46 under special programs has been increasing, which is not uncommon and will be amended in the upcoming budget adjustments. He stated we are currently over budget on books and we will be making adjustments in that area soon due to grants received. He pointed out that line 177 shows that we are about \$7,000 ahead of budget and have no major concerns at this time. Mike said that food services is running a small deficit, but that it is not a major concern, since the goal is to break-even and we usually end up making a small profit that goes back into food services. George moved the November disbursements resolution; Elsie seconded. The motion passed. Elsie moved the December disbursements resolution; George seconded. The motion passed.

John reviewed the annual budget timeline. He encouraged interested members to come to the March Finance Committee meeting. Gloria announced that a Special Board meeting will be held on March 18 at 6p.m to review the budget so that we are ready for a formal vote by the April meeting.

CEO Report

Tom reviewed his PowerPoint presentation (attached):

- our 5th grade dancing classrooms performers won the gold medal at the semi-final competition and will compete in the finals in the spring
- a small group from the instrumental program performed at the Barnes Museum recently
- the girls basketball team doing very well and may expand next year; the boys team is regrouping
- the new Lego teams participated in their first competition; the 2nd grade team won the spirit award; the 4th-8th grade qualified for the regional competition
- we have almost met our financial goal for this year
- the finale breakfast fundraising meeting is planned for June
- the 5-year charter renewal audit has been completed; we received a report this week.

We were found to be in good financial health and the site visit found no areas that were of major concern. ICS was found to be at the Developing level in academics. Tom said we will be developing specific goals and that he feels it's important for students to also take ownership of their own academic goals. The audit found that our school governance and enrollment policies are areas of strength. We were found to be at the Developing level with our ELL program. Tom noted that our ELL students get adequate time of ELL services, but we need to start ensuring they have ELL instruction daily. The review found that our discipline policies were at the developing level; they noted that the teachers included in their focus groups seemed to feel that discipline is not always consistent for all students. The review found our financial management was found to be a strength.

-Next steps for the renewal: The draft report was received this week and we have 10 days to respond. Dana asked how the middle states goals relate to the academic goals. Tom stated that the reviewers felt ICS did not have identifiable goals (i.e., we are at X level, but our goal is to get to Y level by a particular date).

-We had a positive 3-year food services review with just one non-financial correction to make

-Tom reviewed that the board had a special meeting last week to vote on the waiver requested by the SRC regarding giving the SRC more time to review new charter applications. The board had planned to have a fuller discussion at tonight's meeting, but now that is a moot point because the SRC has decided they are staying with the original decision date. The SRC will meet next Wednesday, February 18th at 3:30p.m. By noon this Friday we need to let them know who is speaking for our 3 minutes; Tom will also clarify whether we only get 3 minutes or 6, since we submitted two different applications. After all applicants speak, the SRC will vote. Tom noted that none of the current charter operators signed the waivers. He explained that if one or both of our applications is rejected, we have two options: 1) appeal to the state or 2) re-submit the application after making corrections.

-the 21st Century grant after school program has 114 students attending and attendance is at 92%. Programming includes literacy development, art, music, Scrabble Club, Lego Club, nutrition class, and parent ESL classes. This summer will include theatre, National Bridge Association, Summer Book Club and "Kindergarten Next Year Now" for 20 of our in-coming kindergartners

-The Next Year Now students will start meeting on Wednesday afternoons and Saturdays through the end of the school year and then on every weekday during the 21st Century summer program

-The 5 year Strategic Planning process will include three Sunday sessions: February 22, March 15 and April 19. Gloria stated that she would like to be sure to look at the concern raised by some teachers during the charter renewal process, regarding discipline not being meted out consistently. Tom noted that we do have a Racial Equity Task Force. Kristen noted that the Task Force is focusing on ensuring that our teachers are proficient at handling issues of race that arise in school. Tom reported that the Charter School

Office plans to highlight ICS' work in this area at an upcoming SRC meeting, since they are trying to emphasize positive aspects of charters.

Tom explained that we budgeted the purchase of Chromebooks through the 21st Century grant. John moved the motion; Mike seconded. The motion passed.

John reported that our business office has been having some problems with our current payroll company and recommends that we change to ADP. Susanna moved the motion; George seconded. The motion passed.

Human Resources Committee Update

Tom explained that over the past several years we have been working on increasing the number of teachers who are fully certified in the areas they are teaching. He noted that there are still several teachers who are not fully certified. Susanna explained that the committee has been discussing this issue and this plan gives those teachers a chance to comply during next school year. Krista moved the motion; Barbara seconded. Dana asked whether we are obligated to have all teachers certified. Tom stated that although charter schools can have up to 25% of teachers not certified, he feels it is important that our teachers meet certification requirements. Elsie asked if we see a difference with someone who has certification. Tom stated that in most traditional schools you can't be hired without full certification. He noted that you can still start in an Intern Certificate program. The motion passed.

Approved Private School Resolution

Gloria explained that this involves a student who received special education services and that ICS is obligated by law to pay for an Approved Private School if we feel the student's special education needs cannot be met by ICS. Claiborne moved the motion; John seconded. The motion passed.

Governance Update

Barbara said that so far five names have been submitted; several are ICS parents. She reminded everyone that we are looking for: diversity, experience in marketing, development, accounting, or law. She said that several of the people recommended have a legal background. In addition, the committee hopes to recruit at least one native Spanish speaker, a non-ICS parent, and possibly a retiree.

Rain Garden Update

Rashidah reported that parent Julie Snell has started a group to work on the rain garden improvements. They have applied for a small grant with which they hope to develop a video that can be used to educate people about the project. They will also survey parents and teachers to see how they can connect the project with activities in the classroom. Rashidah has agreed to be a liaison between the rain garden committee and the board; she will share documents in the Drop Box.

Adjournment

Gloria asked Amy to give some highlights. Amy reported that kindergarten's 100th day will be celebrated this week and that our annual Grandfriends Day is coming up later this month. Kristen said that middle school's National History Day Night went very well; over 90% of the students came back to ICS that night to give their presentations. Jenny reported that today's teacher/parent brainstorming session was very well-attended and there are a lot of great conversations and ideas. Amy said the author who presented at the recent PTA event was well-received. Kristen added that in the past we had tried to talk with staff about race, but it didn't go very well. We had consultants come in to work with us over many months and now on February 25th we will be having a staff discussion

group where staff will bring examples of how they integrate the subject of race into their work with students.

Gloria reminded all board members that the state ethics forms are required by the end of April; they get submitted to Megan. The meeting was adjourned at 7:50p.m.

**Independence Charter School
February 11, 2015
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

November Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of November 2014 in the amount of \$332,985.35

December Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of December 2014 in the amount of \$379,039.97

Payroll Services Contract

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees agrees to contract with ADP, as an outsourced payroll provider and that the Chief Executive Officer is authorized to execute any and all documents necessary to effect this resolution in consultation with legal counsel and the business controller.

Chromebook Purchase

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the purchase of twenty-five (25) Chromebooks and one cart through 21st Century funds for no more than \$11,000.

Teacher Certification Contract Language

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the contract language additions as presented for teachers who are not PA-certified in their content areas.

Approved Private School

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the tuition payment to Pathway School, an Approved Private School, for an ICS student with special education needs.

Resolutions DEFEATED: None

Resolutions TABLED – None