

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
June 8, 2011 7:00 pm**

Board Members Present: Rona Buchalter (via Skype), John Eagen, Mary Fitzpatrick, Derrick Johnson, Eli Lesser, Fran Melmed, Pam Prell, Pedro Rodriguez, Elsie Stern, Dana Twyman

Board Member(s) Absent: Naomi Wyatt

Others Present: Jerry Santilli, Business Manager; Jurate Krokys, CEO; Stephanie Bungard, Principal; Megan Steelman, Administrative Assistant; Lauren Ayala, Parent

I. Call to Order

Elsie explained that since Rona is only available via Skype tonight, Elsie will be chairing the meeting. Elsie called the meeting to order at 7:07p.m. She summarized the agenda, which will include the election of officers.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May meeting were approved unanimously with minor corrections to misspelled words/names.

III. Public Comment Period

Kristen Long (Staff) Kristen thanked out-going Board member Pam Prell for Pam's influence on so many things at ICS, especially in the area of curriculum development.

IV. CEO Report

Jurate reported that tomorrow and Friday are our Global Citizenship Days (formerly the International Festival); she noted that the ideas for the changes came from the wonderful ICS staff. The plan is to do this in greater depth; the first day will be lots of interactive activities at the school; the second day will be a full performance day at the Gershman Y.

Jurate thanked Odamis Fernandez-Sheinbaum, who has chaired the Director Review Committee. She also noted the many student achievements listed in this month's CEO report.

VI. Non-BOT Committee Reports

Teachers: There was no report.

VII. BOT Committee Reports

Human Resources: No report was circulated.

Jurate explained that we've gone through an intensive interview and demonstration lesson process with prospective new teachers; she noted that many teachers were involved in the interview process. She noted that the contract says "teacher" in case we would need to move a teacher to a different position. Pam moved the teacher/counselor hiring motion; Fran seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jurate explained that we have a diverse Director Review Committee, who represented many facets of ICS. She noted that she and the committee recommend Kristen Long for the Middle School Director position. Odamis commented that although we knew Kristen, most of us did not know a lot about her. He said he got to spend the day with her, observing teachers, etc. and noted that at the end of the day he saw that she is someone

the staff can learn from and he thinks she'll do a great job. Pam noted that this was a very interesting process. She noted that when people know you, they already know your flaws, which can make it difficult. Pam noted that people on the committee were really inspired by Kristen during the interview process, especially hearing her articulate her vision for the school. Pedro added that he feels the process that was developed was phenomenal and felt like it had been institutionalized, even though it was a new process. Elsie asked whether the process has been documented. Odamis stated that is being finalized. Pam moved the resolution; Rona seconded. Eli stated that yesterday he got to have an hour conversation with Kristen and that it's also a great statement of how Kristen has grown with Independence Charter School. Eli also noted he wants to commend Odamis on his leadership in this process. The motion passed unanimously. Kristen received a round of applause.

Policy: There was no report.

V. Finance/Business

Jerry noted the cash flow continues to be strong and ICS is prepared in case there are any late payments from the Philadelphia School District. He noted several variances:

- 1) the fundraising goal was \$100,000 but only \$12,000 was raised
- 2) the School District subsidy is about \$21,000 ahead of budget due to more students than anticipated receiving special education services
- 3) higher costs for substitutes due to many staff using sick days during leave

He noted that Line 192 shows that the surplus is well over what was anticipated. The April disbursements are less than usual and the Food Services budget is currently running a \$29,000 profit. Jerry stated that ICS will be brought onto the new financial system on July 1st, starting with the purchase orders for next year's supplies. The purchase orders will move electronically and the system will track funds; Jurate can override that if necessary. Pedro asked whether there will be a paper checks and balance system; Jerry said there will not, because there are several controls within the electronic system. It includes a 3-way match to verify before checks are cut. Lauren asked whether this system will be used for reimbursements. Jerry said he hopes to move to reimbursing employees through payroll. Pedro asked if paper items can be scanned; Jerry said that will happen. John stated it would be nice to see a demo. Jerry said he can do that before a Board meeting. John moved the disbursements motion; Derrick seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

John noted that ICS has been grandfathered into getting lease reimbursement. Pam moved the reimbursement motion; Fran seconded. Jerry explained that since ICS leases their building from the Worlds of Opportunity Foundation, it is eligible for these funds, which comes to about \$120 per student. Rona asked what the outlook is for this in the future; Jerry stated as far as he knows, there are no plans at the moment to cut this. There was roll call vote: Pedro-aye, Mary-aye, Pam-aye, Fran-aye, Dana-aye, Rona-aye, Elsie-aye, John-aye, Eli-aye, Derrick-aye. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

Dana reported that Jurate recommends that the Board approve the use of ten additional student slots for the coming school year. If we do enroll 10 more students, we'd ultimately be over-enrolling by about five (5); however, there is usually some attrition throughout the year. Jurate noted the practicality of over-enrolling is that if a student transfers out, you don't need to add another student mid-year. She noted that we would look where there is space and would not overcrowd classrooms. Dana noted that we may want to add more students in fourth grade, instead of Middle School, so that those students have more time at ICS. Dana stated that Jurate reported that some staff feel

Immersion teachers have a break, since the classes with lower enrollment tend to be Immersion classes. Pam asked what the process is for a child entering Immersion in a higher grade. Jurate explained that in 2nd-8th grade, students need to show certain competencies in Spanish, showing that the child is at least at a level where s/he would have been promoted to the next grade. She noted we have done a lot of work with immigrant families. Pam asked Dana what the subcommittee's recommendation is. John stated that he's a bit uneasy regarding over-enrolling, since there's a possibility that not as many students as usual will leave during the year. Pam asked who prepared the report, stating she found it helpful. Jurate stated that Stephanie prepared the bulk of it. Pam stated she feels we should look at the possibility of lunches in the classroom to free up some space in the lunch room. Jurate stated that one idea is cycling a classroom per month eating in their classrooms. Odamis noted that our immersion testing does not include math testing. Pam commented that by adding more students, we may mean that we're moving forward with the need to add more space. Dana moved a motion: *Whereas the School District of Philadelphia has authorized the funding of an additional ten students to ICS, Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes the CEO to enroll up to 10 additional students for the 2011-2012 school year.* Pedro moved the motion; Mary seconded. Eli added that the CEO will continue to need to give feedback to the Board about how this is working. Rona noted that the CEO will need to come to the Board if there is any plan to enroll 25 or more students in a classroom. The motion passed unanimously.

Elsie noted that there are several nominees for Board membership; the committee meets again tomorrow and plans to present nominees at the July meeting.

Elsie noted that the Board discussed the possibility of the Horvat/Cucchiara research proposal and asked Pam to give an update. Pam noted these researchers from Temple (Jurate noted they were recommended by a researcher at Penn) are interested in studying ICS. Originally they thought they could find grant funding, but ultimately couldn't because funders wanted a larger group of schools to be studied. They then asked ICS to fund it; however, at this point, the researchers have gotten a fellowship to fund the project. However, ICS would need to pay a few thousand dollars to transcribe data. For additional funds, ICS could publish a brochure, etc with the results. The question is what the Board would want the research to cover. Rona asked whether the Board has seen any of their prior work; Pam noted they shared a report they did for Youth Build. Pam will share that. Elsie asked whether ICS legal counsel should review the IRB. Eli noted we need to find out what our requirements are to be sure about how they are gathering the data, keeping confidentiality, and who owns the data. Eli noted we would want to review the report before making it public, but would definitely want it to be available to others. Fran asked whether they've outlined how they're going to collect the data. Jurate said they have not, but she will get that. Pam stated she hopes they will want to look at students after they graduate from ICS to see how what they're doing now reflects what they learned at ICS. Jurate stated that she will invite the researchers to meet either before the July Board meeting or at least with a sub-set of the Board. Elsie stated that the researchers have already noted that they have already experienced a positive sense about ICS, which is why they want to study ICS.

IX. New Business

Elsie started the discussion on Board structure and noted she will bring a resolution to the table next month, including: 1) Structure of Board seats, 2) Terms of Board seats, 3) Increasing the size of the Board. She noted that the structure of Founder and Community Seats made sense in the beginning of the school but don't seem necessary now; the two and three year terms have also been confusing. The recommendation is to have

“Trustees” who would serve 3-year terms and could serve two consecutive terms, but would need to take at least a year off before being eligible to be re-nominated. The “Parent” seats would continue to be 2-year terms. There would also need to be discussions with people after their first term to see how things are going. She noted that the Board started out small and then grew larger. At one point it became unwieldy and then a lot of the real work ended up getting done by the Executive Committee, which some Board members did not like. Pam noted the Board also used to have a lot of committees and that when former Board member Nicole Kilcullen went to a national charter school meeting, she brought back helpful information regarding charter school boards. At that point, the Board decided to make the Board smaller. Elsie noted that if the bulk of work is going to be done in committees, then an 11-member Board seems too small. The consultants recommend to expand the parameters to 9-18 to have more flexibility to get the Board of the size that’s needed at any given time. Elsie noted this will be part of this summer’s strategic planning process. Jurate noted there was also discussion regarding the unique nature of our Board (i.e., significant parent involvement, etc). Elsie stated that we will also need to discuss the roles of the Parent and Teacher Representative seats. Eli stated he thinks the growth plan is going to be a separate plan from the academic one that was completed successfully with the Middle States Accreditation process. He noted that we also need to look at why we bring Board members on only at the end of the school year; Pam noted that had not been what it was like in the past, but had evolved to ensure training occurs at natural intervals.

Eli stated that we want to bring on new Board members in July; he noted that the Board might not meet in August, but we want to have a planned meeting just in case we need it. John moved the resolution; Mary seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Jurate circulated invitations to her annual picnic on June 18th.

Elsie thanked Stephanie for the work she’s done, noting specifically work on data, and the connections she’s made with the kids. She also noted how gracious Stephanie was during the new leadership model planning. Stephanie read a statement to the Board, thanking them for her three years at ICS and said she knows there’s nowhere else like it. She noted that she feels the Board values the opinions of staff. She stated that she will be returning to teaching. She thanked the board for remaining true to the mission of charter schools. Jurate thanked Stephanie for bringing wonderful ideas to ICS and for her openness to grow. She was given flowers and received a round of applause. Pam noted that when Stephanie started at ICS, Stephanie volunteered to take on the strategic planning goal of world cultures and feels that was a significant contribution.

Elsie thanked Rona for her work for her two years as President of the ICS Board, noting Rona was the President while the Board was transitioning from its youth. In addition she was the first President who was not a Founder.

Elsie nominated the slate of officers for the 2011-2012 school year:

Eli Lesser- President

Naomi Wyatt- Vice President

Derrick Johnson- Secretary

John Eagen- Treasurer

Pedro moved the motion; Mary seconded. Those present accepted the nominations; Pedro noted that Naomi had accepted prior to the meeting. They were elected unanimously.

Elsie thanked Fran for her service and for having agreed to be on the Board this last year.

Rona thanked Pam for her many years of Board work (about 13 years) for ICS; she noted that Pam is the last Founder on the Board. Rona stated that Pam has been a great Board member recruiter, courting potential Board members. Rona asked people for their memories; she noted her significant impact on ICS curriculum. Jurate noted she could not imagine ICS without Pam. Rona noted that Pam formulated service learning at ICS through our partnership with Need Indeed. Rona stated that Pam has had a profound impact on how we do things at ICS; she is a problem solver, is tireless, gives deference to experience, and comes to problems without a personal opinion. Eli stated he is so glad that Riley Prell (Pam's youngest child) will be at ICS for eight more years, so Pam will be around too. He noted that she has been objective as a Board member who is also an ICS parent. Eli stated he and his wife are at the point where Pam and her husband were when they decided to help start a school and that he can't imagine making that type of time commitment. He noted that Pam is modest, but she is a giant and that Pam has brought about educational reform in Philadelphia and has helped build one of the most remarkable schools. Jurate stated that if Pam hadn't dreamed this school, there are opportunities for kids that wouldn't have happened. Pam was given roses and was applauded. Jurate noted that Pam managed to elevate the voices of teachers in our school. Pam noted that all the amazing things that have happened at ICS were due to a lot of other people too and she feels she wasn't the hardest worker. She noted that she and Nicole Kilcullen shared the president's role one year, but she knows that's not a good model for the future leadership. Pam said the Board is in a good state, so she feels it's now easy to leave the Board in such great hands. She thanked Rona for her agreeing to become President two years ago and thanked Jurate for her graciousness and vision.

Elsie noted that the Governance Committee is recommending a one year extension of the terms of Pedro Rodriguez, Rona Buchalter and Elsie Stern (who would move to a Community seat). Eli moved the motion; Mary seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Elsie welcomed the new Parent Board member (2-year term), Lauren Ayala. Lauren read her oath of office.

X. Adjournment

Rona moved for adjournment; Eli seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Handouts circulated prior to this meeting:

- Agenda
- CEO report
- Finance report
- April 2011 financials
- Curriculum report
- Student Enrollment Proposal

**Independence Charter School
June 8, 2011
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

1. New Teacher/Counselor Hires

Be it resolved that the following individuals be offered full time positions as listed for the 2011-2012 school year under the terms and conditions specified by the CEO and the ICS contract:

Pamela Meacham: Kindergarten
Claire Landau: 1st Grade
Erika Saunders: 1st Grade
Steve Bellizzi: Social Studies/Spanish Language Arts
Julie Fialkow: Lower School Counselor

2. Middle School Director Hire

Be it resolved that Kristen Long be offered the position of ICS Middle School Director for the 2011-2012 school year under the terms and conditions specific by the CEO and the ICS contract.

3. April Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve disbursements from the month of April 2011 in the amount of \$58,381.75 as presented to the Board.

4. Lease Reimbursement

Be it resolved that the board of Trustees of Independence Charter School approve the application for lease reimbursement for fiscal year 2010-2011 from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and direct the Chief Executive Officer and Controller to file the application by the due date of June 30, 2011.

5. 2011-2012 Board Meeting Schedule

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees resolves to approve the following meeting calendar for July 2011-June 2012:

July 13, 2011	January 11, 2012
August 10, 2011	February 8, 2012
September 14, 2011	March 14, 2012
October 12, 2011	April 11, 2012
November 9, 2011	May 9, 2012
December 14, 2011	June 20 th , 2012 (3 rd Wednesday, instead of 2 nd Wednesday)

6. Enrollment of Additional students

Whereas the School District of Philadelphia has authorized the funding of an additional ten students to ICS. Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees authorizes the CEO to enroll up to 10 additional students for the 2011-2012 school year.

**DEFEATED
None**

**Resolutions
TABLED**