

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
June 11, 2014 6p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** George Awad, Barbara Dundon, John Eagen, Susanna Greenberg, Tre Johnson, Nirva LaFortune, Krista Pfeiffer, Gloria Shabazz, Sheila Simmons, Elsie Stern, Claiborne Taylor, Dana Twyman

**Board Member(s) Absent:** Mike Barsanti, Rebecca Clothey, Brigitte Daniel, Richardson Dilworth

**Others Present:** Thomas Scheid, CEO; Ramzy Andrawos, Director of Operations; Kareem Thomas, Lower School Principal; Kristen Long, Middle School Principal; Amy Leigh, Staff Rep to the Board; David Peterson, IT Coordinator; Mike Danyo, Santilli & Thomson associate; Megan Steelman, Compliance Manager; Michelle Campbell, Steven Johns, Fabiana Perla & Francine Donato, parents; Rashidah Andrews, parent & Parent Board Member- Elect; Ingrid Boucher, Observer/Consultant; Scott Wheeler, Observer/Consultant; Mikiko Poy, Philadelphia Schools Partnership.

**Call to Order**

Elsie called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. She stated that as indicated on the agenda, the board will now go into an executive session for about 10 minutes to discuss confidential personnel matters.

The board returned at 6:33p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

Sheila moved to accept the minutes; Barbara seconded. The May special meeting minutes were approved.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**CEO Report**

Tom's focused on how he's done on his CEO goals for his first year at ICS:

-Get to know the ICS community:

- tries to be visible at arrival and dismissal
- meets regularly with the PTA officers and members, which has resulted in increased participation at school functions of families whose first language is Spanish
- has had informal gatherings for staff
- has visited classrooms
- has participated in several conferences (PACIE, WISE-Qatar, World Affairs, School District of Philadelphia, etc)

-Oversee and coordinate improving student performance:

- supported on-going strategies with Principals and Assessment Coordinator
- increased access to technology
- ensured Spanish language support

-Begin preparation for 5-year renewal for 2014-2015

- worked to get the 2010 charter signed and approved
- on-going contact with the School District of Philadelphia's Charter School office

-Maintain financial sustainability of ICS:

- increased fundraising
- maintained and supported the 2013-2014 budget
- increased internal accountability measures
- good working relationship with business office
- made budget reductions for the 2014-2015 school year

Tom noted he's very proud that we now have greater participation of our Spanish speaking families. He also clarified that he lets the principals guide instruction. Tom also reported that this year he has completed the PA Superintendent's certificate program and has obtained his Level II PA Principal's certificate. In addition, he has mentored a Principal Intern and assisted employees in accessing professional development for certification requirements and professional growth.

Tom noted that he has also been working with the board to develop a growth process and timeline. He stated that his initial goals/areas of improvement for 2014/2015 are:

- continue to develop collaborative leadership
- increase communication between CEO and all staff groups
- propose a staff committee
- re-evaluate student performance
- complete 5-year renewal process
- complete the annual charter plan and school comprehensive plan
- assist ICS employees with new staffing structure

Before moving any resolutions, Elsie clarified that items on the consent agenda are items already sent to the board by Saturday. All others are on the regular agenda.

Tom explained that Begoña Munoz's Keystone Staff application had not been included with the others approved at the December 2013 meeting. John moved the motion; Sheila seconded. Krista abstained. The motion passed.

Elsie asked that the remaining CEO resolutions be considered together:

- Harassment & Bullying
- Separation agreements
- Special education agreement
- Sick day donations
- New Teacher Contracts
- New Assistant Principal Contract
- Board Meeting Calendar

Dana moved the motions; Barbara seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

### **Consent Agenda**

Elsie explained that all these resolutions have been vetted by the board:

- Middle School Math Textbooks
- Returning Teacher & Counselor Contracts
- Additional Clarification to ICS' FMLA Policy
- Technology Policy
- 2014-2015 Recurring Contracts

Dana moved the consent agenda; Susanna seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

### **Fundraising Goals 2014-2015**

Elsie explained that Mike was unable to attend tonight, so she's asked Tom and Tre to present. They explained that the board has decided to go with the Benevon model: start with hosting new individuals to regular breakfasts/tours of the school; no "ask" happens

at this event. We would keep these individuals “in the loop” and then at the end of the school year, we’d hold a one hour off-site breakfast event, inviting the folks who have toured, etc, along with some new folks. We’d distribute pledge cards at the end of the event. Tre noted this is an exciting opportunity to have a collaborative process between the board and the staff. Elsie added that last week we had our first ever “parlor meeting” to raise money for the Jurate Krokys Student Travel Fund. Barbara asked if we would be asking for a particular amount on the pledge cards. Tom said there would be recommended levels to check off, but donors could also write in other amounts. Tre said we’d build on our relationships with them and then it would make it easier to ask for more from them as time in the future. Nirva said it sounds a little exclusive and asked how parents be involved in this process. Tom said we would continue with all our current ways of fundraising, but we need to increase our fundraising efforts. This tour/breakfast approach would be used to reach out to a whole new group of folks. Sheila said she likes this idea and reminded everyone that we are advocates for quality education for our children. Krista asked if we’re giving anything in return for big donations and suggested we might want to recognize them in some way. She also asked who will be doing the things like making name tags, etc. Tom said we have a Development Associate and we might need to do some investment for this program, asking for some outside help. Dana asked why there would be a second breakfast, instead of an evening event for that event in order to appeal to potential donors. She also agreed that we should get some affordable giveaways (notepads, etc). She noted that we should give the board a chance to give input about the video. Tom said that fundraisers have said that the two breakfasts would be very different---- the first one would be very informal, the second would be off-site. Elsie noted that we’d be trying to get these generous folks to have ICS on their radar. Susanna said that she has experienced this type of request even after a first visit to a place. Elsie said the Fundraising Committee will be fine-tuning the plan. Barbara said she really likes how enthusiastic Tom is about this. She cautioned the board that this will take time. Elsie asked if we have general affirmation for this plan from the board. The board was in agreement.

George moved the motion to accept the grant from the McLean Contributionship; Gloria seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Finance Report**

Gloria noted that we approved the 2014-2015 budget last month, which included the necessity of staffing cuts. She clarified that under the law, we are not allowed to revise the budget for at least 90 days. If you’re adding a budget line, you need to amend it. However, you don’t need to amend the budget if you are making a change within a budget line. Gloria said the new financial statement shows the effect on our fund balance.

Mike Danyo reviewed the budget adjustments that reflect the School District of Philadelphia’s reduction in the per pupil allotment, reductions in Title I and ACCESS funds, decreases in NCLB funds and the late arrival of the 2012-2013 lease subsidy money, which meant it was added to the 2013-2014 budget.

Gloria asked Mike to review the financials. He explained that there are no major variances, since we have made the budget adjustments previously discussed. Mike noted that the IDEA (federal funds for special education) funds have finally started to come in, but will show up on the next financial report.

Mike noted that the food services program has been running a profit all year. George moved the finance motions:

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Textbooks

Achieve 3000 contract  
2013-2014 Audit and Tax Preparation Services  
2013-2014 Lease Reimbursement  
March Disbursements  
April Disbursements  
Cleaning Service Contract

Dana seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

George moved the lease reimbursement resolution; John seconded. A roll call vote was taken:

Nirva- yes

Dana- yes

Sheila- yes

John-yes

Gloria-yes

Krista-yes

Claiborne-yes

Tre- yes

Barbara- yes

Susanna- yes

George- yes

Elsie- yes

Brigitte- absent

Mike- absent

Rebecca- absent

Richardson- absent

### **Presentation of Fair Funding Resolution**

Elsie asked Tom to review this resolution. Tom noted that recently there have been a lot of divisive politics around school funding, especially around funding for special education. This resolution is meant to align ourselves with the School District of Philadelphia, urging for fair funding for all Pennsylvania public school students. Sheila and Tre concurred that we need to advocate with a wider community like this. Tom said that if the board passes this resolution, we will send it out via Pennlink. Tom read the resolution. Susanna moved the motion; George seconded. Gloria asked if all the numbers are accurate; Tom said that the information is accurate; Sheila said this data has been stated over and over in many places. Susanna asked whether it matters if the wording is exactly the same for all charters; Tom said it was not. Elsie thanked those who worked on this. All agreed on friendly amendments: correct typos, change “Board of Directors” to “Board of Trustees” and to state specifically that we urge that the change be made in the next legislative session.

### **Governance & Nominating**

Elsie asked Barbara to go through the nominations. Gloria reported that Greg Turlington was recommended by Brigitte; he has non-profit finance experience. The company for which he currently works encourages staff to be involved in the community. He was unable to attend tonight, so he'll be sworn in at the September meeting. Barbara stated she nominates Greg to the board of Independence Charter School; he was voted in unanimously. Barbara reported that Rashidah Andrews is the elected parent representative for 2014-2016. Barbara administered the oath to Rashidah:

*I do solemnly swear, or affirm, that I will support, obey and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of this Commonwealth, and that I will discharge the duties of my office as a member of the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees with fidelity.*

Barbara moved that Susanna, Gloria and Rebecca be renewed for three-year terms and Elsie for one year. Elsie explained that she is up for only a one-year renewal because she was first a parent rep for two years, then a regular rep for three so is only eligible to serve one more year before needing to rotate off in accordance with the bylaws.

Barbara read the nominations for officers:

Gloria- President

Tre- Vice President

John- Treasurer

Susanna- Secretary

Elsie said she's grateful that John has agreed to take on the Finance Committee again, since Gloria will now be President. Our new board member, Greg, knows that the plan is for him to move into the Finance chair role once he's ready for that role. They were elected unanimously.

### **President's Farewell-Closing**

Elsie noted that Nirva's Parent Rep term is now up and that she is also moving out of Philadelphia for a new job. Elsie thanked her for her hard work over the past two years, especially during the CEO search, and her commitment toward global learning. She was presented with an original piece of art made by ICS students under the direction of Teacher Natalie.

Elsie recollected that she has had an incredible two years as board President and that she feels that we have grown as a board and have made a huge amount of growth. She noted that she feels that our new CEO Tom has an extraordinary combination of experience, intelligence and humility. She gratefully acknowledged the amount of relationship-building Tom has done during his first year. Elsie also thanked Gloria for stepping up to be elected President.

Tom thanked the board for their support over his first year, especially Elsie. He noted that he's used to doing a lot of things on his own and Elsie has challenged him to do a lot more thinking. He presented flowers and a card to Elsie. Gloria presented a gift to Elsie on behalf of the board. Kristen thanked Elsie for her style--- making it clear that decisions were being made with students and staff in mind.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18p.m.

**Independence Charter School  
June 11, 2014  
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

**Keystone Staff Status**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby awards ICS Keystone Staff status to ICS employee Begoña Munoz.

**Prohibition of Harassment and Bullying**

Whereas Independence Charter School (ICS) promotes global citizenship and  
Whereas ICS intends to be a place where everyone is welcome,  
BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby resolves that harassment and/or bullying on the basis of sex, race, color, or national origin or on the basis of disability is prohibited.

**Separation Agreements**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the separation agreements for two employees.

**Special Education Agreement**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the agreement between the school and the parents of a student who receives special education services.

**Sick Day Donations**

Whereas ICS values its employees and recognizes the commitment and dedication of ICS employees, and Whereas employees may at any time find themselves or an immediate family member faced with serious medical illness resulting in loss of work days, some of which may not be covered by sick leave and/or disability insurance, and  
Whereas the ICS employee community desires to acknowledge its concern for fellow employees, Be it hereby resolved that the Independence Charter School (ICS) Board of Trustees resolves as follows:

ICS employees who earn sick days may contribute a maximum of one (1) sick day per fiscal year to another staff member for use due to a serious medical illness. Staff members may donate a maximum of three (3) sick days per fiscal year. Sick days may not be donated for maternity leave. The collective maximum number of sick days contributed to a single employee under this policy shall not exceed the number of days required for the employee to become eligible for short-term disability insurance benefits. This policy shall be effective retroactive to May 1, 2014 and will expire June 30, 2014.

**New Teacher Contract**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the 2014-2015 contracts for Latoyia Hall, Kaley Walsh and Kris Earle.

**Vice Principal Contract**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the 2014-2015 contract for Renee Boylan Free.

**2014-2015 Board Meeting Calendar**

Be it resolved that all 2014-2015 Independence Charter School Board of Trustees meetings will be held on Wednesday at 6p.m. at Independence Charter School on  
September 10th  
October 15th  
December 10th  
February 11th  
April 8th  
June 10th

### **Middle School Math Textbooks**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the purchase of Connected Math 3 in the amount of \$11,309.04 to be utilized as the math curriculum in sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

### **Returning Teacher & Counselor Contracts**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the 2014-2015 contracts for

Amaya McCaskey Amber Spurka Amy Leigh Anais Brutus  
Anne Hall Anne Zumbo Annie Brooks Antonia Jauregui Barbara Kay  
Begona Munoz Brian Flynt Dana Newsome Dana Spadotto Doris Naffah  
Elaine Latimer Elisse Santiago-Droz Erika Saunders Fatimah Johnson  
Francesca Borin Gabe DiBerardinis Gaja Stirbys Hope Willoe Jennifer Jutzi  
Joe Benner Joe TayounKajsa Thompson Kate Dean Keia Miller  
Keriann Painter Kerry Routh Lance Lukasiak Laura Schofield Leonor Jimenez  
Luz Marina Guevara-Conde Lynn Eckerman Marcela Arango-Ortiz  
Meagan Ingerson Natalie Henderson Nick Vacca Odamis Fernandez-Sheinbaum  
Pamela Meacham Rich Taggart Ronith Epelbon Scott Craig Shavon Norris  
Sophia Seifert Steve Bellizzi Sweta Gandhi Tienne Martin  
Tracey Kohl Yineth Romero

### **Additional Clarification to ICS' FMLA Policy**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby amend one sentence in its existing FMLA policy to read (new language in bold):“All employees who meet the applicable time-in-service requirements may be granted a total of twelve (12) weeks of family and medical leave during the **12-month period that begins with the employee's first day of qualifying leave** for the following reasons . . .”

### **Technology Policy**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby adopt the new technology policy as presented, which will supersede the existing policy, effective immediately.

### **2014-2015 Recurring Contracts**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Independence Charter School approves the following recurring payments and contracts for the contracts for the period commencing July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014:

Pediatric Therapeutic Services (PTS)  
Therapy Source  
GHR Staffing

### **McLean Contributionship Grant**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby accepts the grant in the amount of \$15,000 from the McLean Contributionship for the purchase of third and fourth grade mobile computer labs.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Textbooks**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the purchase of the new edition 4<sup>th</sup> grade *Reading Wonders* textbooks, not to exceed \$13,500.

#### **Achieve 3000 contract**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the renewal of the Achieve 3000 program for an amount not to exceed \$22,000.

#### **2013-2014 Audit and Tax Preparation Services**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees retains St. Clair, CPA's to conduct the annual financial audit and tax preparation for the 2013-2014 fiscal year for an amount not to exceed \$20,000.00.

#### **2013-2014 Lease Reimbursement**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the application for approval and reimbursement of a charter school lease for the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

#### **March Disbursements**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of March 2014 in the amount of \$324,652.24

#### **April Disbursements**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of April 2014 in the amount of \$374,231.02

#### **Cleaning Service Contract**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the cleaning contract with Ned's Metropolitan Cleaning Services for July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014 at a rate of \$ 7,500 per month.

#### **Fair Funding Formula**

RESOLUTION URGING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ESTABLISH A NEW FUNDING FORMULA FOR BASIC EDUCATION IN THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE INDEPENDENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's more than 1.8 million public school students deserve the highest quality education; and

WHEREAS, the state's contribution in funding public education as a percentage of basic instructional expenses has declined from over 50% during the mid 1970's to less than 35% today; and, on average, other states contribute 44% of total education funding; and Pennsylvania ranks 47<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in the amount of state subsidies allocated to support elementary and secondary education, and ranks 8<sup>th</sup> in reliance on local taxes; and

WHEREAS, as the state's share of K-12 education funding decreases while the number of state and federal mandates for public schools steadily increases each year, additional burden is placed on local taxpayers to make up the difference to ensure that our students' education is not jeopardized; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, basic education funding has been distributed without the benefit of a reliable, fair and transparent funding formula, the lack of which results in great disparities in how state education funds are distributed to school districts; and

WHEREAS, these inequities effectively harm the ability of school districts to adequately and fairly provide the resources for the different needs of its students, especially those in poverty, those with disabilities, English language learners and students with other needs; and

WHEREAS, the Independence Charter School supports the development of a system of public school financing that addresses the needs of public school districts, public charter schools and students, and establishes a school funding formula that is equitable, adequate, comprehensive and consistent.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School urges the General Assembly to reinvest its interest in the support of all public schools by taking legislative action in the next legislative session to establish a formula that is predictable and addresses adequacy and equity for all school districts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Independence Charter School will encourage others, including parents, students and district taxpayers, to contact the Pennsylvania General Assembly to convey the importance of establishing a fair and equitable public school funding formula; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be submitted to the elected senators and representatives of the Independence Charter School in the General Assembly, and to the Governor of Pennsylvania.

Adopted this 11th day of June, 2014.  
Signed,

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Elsie Stern  
Board President

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Susanna Greenberg  
Board Secretary

**Resolutions DEFEATED: None**

**Resolutions TABLED**