

**Independence Charter School  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes  
October 9, 2013 6p.m.**

**Board Members Present:** Mike Barsanti, Rebecca Clothey (via Skype), Barbara Dundon, John Eagen, Susanna Greenberg, Krista Pfeiffer, Gloria Shabazz, Sheila Simmons, Elsie Stern, Claiborne Taylor, Dana Twyman

**Board Member(s) Absent:** George Awad, Brigitte Daniel, Richardson Dilworth, Tre Johnson, Nirva LaFortune

**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; Jerry Santilli, Business Manager from Santilli & Thomson; Mike Danyo, Santilli & Thomson associate; Megan Steelman, Compliance Manager; Ebru Erkut, parents; Marcia Wilkof, 30<sup>th</sup> Ward Leader; Odamis Fernandez-Sheinbaum, Student Achievement & Testing Coordinator

**Call to Order**

Elsie called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. She noted that the main topic tonight is a presentation on student achievement. She noted that the meeting will end with a group executive session. She asked Mike Barsanti to administer the oath to Barbara Dundon: *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.*

**Approval of Minutes**

The August meeting minutes were approved; those who were not at the meeting abstained.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**Finance**

Gloria summarized the fund balance discussion from the August meeting. She noted that the board wants to designate the use of these surplus funds. She clarified that this is a vote for planning purposes, not a vote to approve spending the money. The proposal is:

Capital Repair & Replacement Fund	- \$ 750,000.00
Subsidy Shortfall	- \$1,500,000.00
MSA Goals Achievement	- \$ 500,000.00
Growth	- \$ 250,000.00
Working Capital Contingency	- \$ Remaining Fund Balance

Gloria read the resolution. John moved the resolution; Susanna seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Gloria asked Mike Danyo to review the financials. Mike explained that there are a few new lines for the recently received PSERS subsidy, anticipated over enrollment funds and federal funds. He noted that we have a surplus now because most summer expenses will not show up until later months since these are only through August. He added that there will be budget adjustments made at the December meeting. He stated that we are not planning to use this year's extra 8% per pupil, since we're expecting a big decrease in the per pupil amount next year. So, the extra 8% will go toward filling that gap next

year. He noted there are no major variances other than that summer school costs ran higher than expected. However, those extra costs will be covered by savings in other areas. Barbara asked about the Worlds of Opportunity Foundation. Mike explained that is our foundation; Elsie clarified that Worlds was started to own the building in case anything would happen to the charter. John asked if there's an expectation that the PSERS subsidy will end. Mike said at this point there's an effort to stop the PSERS subsidy to cyber charters. Elsie explained that charters get the PSERS and lease subsidies because district schools use separate funds for those things, while charters need to pay them from their operating budgets. Krista asked how much we anticipate from over enrollment. Mike said that we expect to receive about \$80,000 which should be received by December. Dana asked whether we'd be changing to medical cost sharing if the school district moves to that in their new contract; Gloria said there would be a discussion if/when that occurs. Gloria read the resolutions. Barbara moved them; Susanna seconded them. The motions passed unanimously.

Elsie announced that we will soon be scheduling new member orientation, which will include an overview of our financial forms and the budget.

Elsie explained that the legal settlement resolution will be discussed at the executive session and voted on at the end of tonight's meeting.

### **CEO Report**

Elsie officially welcomed CEO Tom to his first ICS board meeting as CEO. Tom presented his CEO report, highlighting: completed by the beginning of the school year. He thanked Principal Kristen and Principal Kareem, summer staff, office staff and the board for making his transition smooth. He noted rekindling relationships with the International Visitors Center, PaCIE, etc. as well as new relationships with the University of Pennsylvania and his upcoming trip to Qatar. He noted that ICS is now an integral part of this community. He noted the Royal Theatre in which ICS has shown interest in the past may now be a viable option. He announced that ICS just got a \$750 playground grant; he thanked Ramzy for submitting that funding request. The CEO is working with the HR Committee to update our employee handbook.

Gloria asked about our involvement with the PaCIE conference. Tom noted that we are one of two sites that attendees will be visiting; the other is Bodine High School.

### **Maternity Leave Policy**

Elsie asked Tom to explain the proposed maternity leave policy. Tom explained this is in response to employee situations where the pregnant employee does not meet the FMLA requirements. Tom read the resolution. Susanna said she is supportive of this policy. Gloria moved the motion; Susanna seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **School Performance Profile**

Elsie explained that the state has rolled out a new profile. She asked Tom to explain. Tom presented a slide show; he explained that this new profile is in place of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). 2013-2014 is a baseline year for subgroup measurements. The scoring is based upon a 100-point scale; schools can earn extra credit for advanced performance on state and defined national tests. 40% of the score is based on academic achievement. He noted that 10% of the 40% is for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading, which is based on research about student achievement. Claiborne asked if the common core standards will affect this; Tom said it will eventually affect success. Elsie asked how our growth targets are determined. Kristen and Tom explained the comparison is student to student. Kristen noted that though this is a baseline year, a different test will soon be used. Tom explained that we'll have six years to bridge the gap.

## Student Achievement Presentation

Odamis explained that 70% is considered the baseline for schools who are working on meeting their goals. ICS' score is 79.4; Odamis said the "compare" tab is not working. He said it's harder to tell how we compare with other K-8 schools in close proximity, but only four other schools in the immediate area scored better than ICS. Odamis said that the goal is 100% students performing at proficient or advanced. Claiborne asked whether K-8 schools will ever be responsible for students from ICS who don't graduate from high school. Krista noted that the retention rate points could encourage schools to promote students who are not ready to be promoted.

Pr. Kareem noted that today was our second Unity Day for anti-bullying. Staff and students wore orange to show solidarity.

Kareem reviewed the Middle States goal for closing the achievement gap. He noted results indicate that ICS' Saturday Academy worked. The ones who did better without Saturday School went to private tutoring. He noted that ICS did not make AYP last year due to the scores of some students with special education services. The interventions ICS put in place during last school year (adding another middle school special education teacher, the design of the program, etc.) seemed to have worked. He stated that there is an additional intervention this year; on Early Dismissal Wednesdays, there is tutoring on things the students didn't understand over the last week. Teachers rotate tutoring assignments. He reported that we have nine new ESL students this year. We will have the Math Specialist working with the K-2 teachers so that we can better monitor how our younger students are performing in math. In addition, at bi-monthly meetings, teachers will be discussing how concepts are working across the grade level--- why are things working well for some and not for others. Dana asked how many students use Achieve 3000 outside of school. Odamis said he's not sure off the top of his head, but he knows it's not as high as we would like. He said that is an area teachers are discussing during Early Dismissal Wednesday meetings. He clarified that it is for all 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Elsie asked how we track how kids performance on in-house assessments as compared with state assessments. Odamis said that sometimes the two don't match. Kristen also said that scoring "proficient" on PSSAs is not that difficult, so we should not use that as the bar for achievement. Claiborne asked whether high schools look at 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade attendance and grades or mainly 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Kristen said that it's mostly 7<sup>th</sup> grade. For charters and on waiting lists, it is also the beginning of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Claiborne asked if we've had to cut anything in order to introduce Achieve 3000, etc. Kristen said we have not cut any programs, but some teachers have had to cut some things they had been doing, but some of those things may not have been as connected to the curriculum as they could have been. John asked about why they are focusing on third graders. Kristen said that research shows it's more difficult to add to your reading level as you get older. Kareem also noted that third graders started using a new reading curriculum this year and it appears to be what the students need. The reading teachers are now spending a lot more time in the lower grades. Sheila asked which students are getting the interventions. Kristen said that they are targeted at the underperforming students. Krista noted that the state isn't including race in their "underperforming" group. Odamis added that the vast majority of students in ICS' underperforming category are students of color.

Amy passed around a schedule of events that may interest board members; she is available to coordinate visits. Gloria asked if the presenters think the new performance score is better than AYP; they agreed that it seems much better, since the new index focuses on student academic growth. Elsie thanked the presenters.

## Executive Session

Elsie noted that the board will now go into a brief executive session to discuss a confidential matter.

The board returned at 8:20p.m. Elsie read the settlement resolution and noted that the correct amount is \$5,000. John moved the motion; Susanna seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24p.m.

**Handouts circulated prior to this meeting:**

Agenda

June, July & August 2013 Financials and July & August Disbursements

**Independence Charter School  
October 9, 2013  
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

**June Disbursements**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of June 2013 in the amount of \$247,995.34

**July Disbursements**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of July 2013 in the amount of \$344,567.00

**August Disbursements**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of August 2013 in the amount of \$237,023.63

**2013-2014 ICS Fund Balance Approval**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the following designations of the approximate \$4.6mm 2012-2013 fiscal year end fund balance as follows:

Capital Repair & Replacement Fund	- \$ 750,000.00
Subsidy Shortfall	- \$1,500,000.00
MSA Goals Achievement	- \$ 500,000.00
Growth	- \$ 250,000.00
Working Capital Contingency	- \$ Remaining Fund Balance

**Legal Settlement**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the settlement in the amount of \$5,000 in the legal case presented by the CEO to the board.

**Maternity Leave Policy**

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves the following maternity leave policy:

Employees who do not meet FMLA eligibility requirements are eligible to take up to six (6) unpaid weeks of leave, provided that the employee brings in certification from her doctor that she will be “temporarily disabled” after giving birth or is temporarily disabled due to complicated pregnancy. During those 6 weeks, the employee can use accrued sick and personal leave. If the employee receives ICS medical and dental benefits, those remain in effect through the 6-week period and end on the last day of the month in which the 6 weeks ends if the employee does not return to work by the end of the 6-week period.

**Resolutions DEFEATED: None**

**Resolutions TABLED: None**