

**Independence Charter School
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
September 10, 2014 6p.m.**

Board Members Present: Rashidah Andrews, George Awad, Mike Barsanti, Rebecca Clothey, Barbara Dundon, John Eagen, Tre Johnson, Krista Pfeiffer, Gloria Shabazz, Sheila Simmons, Elsie Stern, Claiborne Taylor, Gregory Turlington, Dana Twyman

Board Member(s) Absent: Brigitte Daniel, Susanna Greenberg, 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; Kerry Routh, Kelly Acuna, Elisse Santiago-Droz, Antonia Jauregui, Steve Bellizzi, Sweta Gandhi, Kaley, Walsh, Ul Rodeck, Natlaie Blum, Marc Blum, Annette Earling, Begona Munoz, Anne Hall, David Peterson, ICS Staff; Gerald Santilli, Business Manager; Mike Danyo, Santilli & Thomson associate; Kelly Shmukler, Stuart Mardeusz, Sandy Cadwalader, Sue Malia-Vogt, Felicia Sarner, Ebru Erkut, Retno Mawarsary, Robert Pandolfo, Rosie McNamara-Jones, Jessica Frederica, Julie Snell, Jerome Shabazz, Debora DeVaughn, Steven Johns, Jack Butler, Esmeralda Morales, Cynthia Kwan, Ron Dukes, Christine Carpenter, Ashley Tobin, David Wallace, Caren Seltzer Devine, Amy Weidner, Anton Moore, Nakia Carr, Francine Donato, Sarah Eisenstein, Mario Winarto, Gloria Miranda, Leticia Cortes, Parents; Megan Steelman, Compliance Manager; Michael Nutter, Mayor of Philadelphia; Dr. Lori Shorr & Travis Lanier, Office of the Mayor; Al Williams, Lamm Realty Group; Julian Thompson, Lauren Thumb, Peng Chao, Philadelphia Charter School Office

Call to Order

Gloria called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Oath of Office

Gloria asked Barbara Dundon to administer the oath of office:

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.

to new member Gregory Turlington, who was voted in at the June meeting. Greg was welcomed with a round of applause.

Approval of Minutes

John moved to accept the June minutes; George seconded. The meeting minutes were approved.

Gloria explained that we are re-ordering the agenda and the Finance report will be next.

Finance Report

She asked business manager Jerry Santilli to review the July financials. Jerry pointed out the new cover page of the financials. One item that is new is highlighting all items over \$10,000. He noted that the 2013-2014 audit has begun and he anticipates that we'll have the June financials by the October meeting.

He noted that since the student subsidy is estimated, that will be adjusted later in the year by the school district. He noted that our cash remains constant and that there are still

some receivables from the last fiscal year. There's a liability on the books for PSERS (pension fund); that will be paid out soon.

John moved the disbursements resolution; George seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Gloria reviewed the procedure for public comments: the board listens and then usually responds in writing at a later time, as opposed to responding immediately during the meeting.

Parent Nakia Carr spoke about her concern regarding school transportation (some buses not showing up at all or showing up late). She urged everyone to rally around this safety issue (children being left alone at bus stops where buses don't arrive). She urged Mayor Nutter to assist with the urgent problem of lack of adequate transportation, especially the lack of trained bus drivers. Gloria noted that the CEO will also be addressing that during his report.

Gloria welcomed staff from the Charter School office, Keyatta Johnson's office, parents, staff, ICS students and she welcomed Mayor Michael Nutter and two of his staff members, Dr. Lori Shorr and Travis Lanier

Mayor Nutter thanked ICS for welcoming him and thanked the parents for being involved in their children's school. He noted that ICS is one of the great schools in Philadelphia. He stated that he is making use of public meetings like these to hear concerns. He noted that district-run and charters are all public schools and that it's his responsibility to make sure students are receiving a quality education and related resources--- pre- K, after school, extra curriculars, etc. He added that our city needs a well-educated workforce and great schools build that foundation. He applauded ICS' excellent reputation and its openness and accessibility. He added that some charters are not as open and accessible as ICS is.

In regard to bus service, he said that one bus company with whom the district contracted went bankrupt last year, so the school district brought in a number of other companies this year. However, on Monday (the first day of school for district-run schools) at least 20 drivers did not show up for work. The district will be bringing on more bus companies to rectify this situation. He said he clearly understand that bus service affects all schools, traditional public, charters and parochial.

He said he will be in Harrisburg next week to work on getting the cigarette tax passed to ensure that stream of funding for public schools. He explained that it has to be passed by the House, the Senate and to be signed by the governor. He clarified that the cigarette tax funding is only enough to just to keep things like they are. He stated that we also need a fair funding formula. He explained that cuts to district schools always hit charters the following year. He emphasized that we all want all children to get a quality education. He said the children of this city are suffering because of the actions of adults and urged everyone to contact their representatives about this critical funding issue. He said what happens in a good school is that there is a sense of hope and that things are going in the right direction. If parents don't have good school options, they make other decisions about where to live. He told ICS students, staff and parents to keep doing what you're doing!

CEO Report (Power Point available)

Tom reported that the school year has started out well. He thanked everyone who worked so hard to get ready for the new year. He noted that he is pleased to announce the

creation of a racial equity task force, which came out of several staff discussions over the past several years.

Tom asked our business manager and Finance Committee chairperson to comment on the budget challenges. Jerry stated that the loss of the school district revenue in last year's budget was difficult to react to because it happened in March and then was retroactive to the beginning of the school year; in addition, the Title I decrease was not announced until February. He added that just recently we just found out that we may lose some additional PSERS money retroactively to last year, because that money was due this year. The PSERS percentage increase is also affecting our budget. He emphasized that developing a fair funding formula is needed for traditional public and charter schools. Elsie asked Tom to give the audience a summary of the request for a fair funding formula. Tom explained that many schools, including ICS, passed resolutions to urge state legislators to create a steady, fair funding formula.

Tom gave an update on fundraising, including several grants recently received. Teacher Luz Marina was given a round of applause for initiating the Dollar General literacy grant for the lower school.

Gloria read the grant resolutions (accepting the Dollar General and Music grants and approving the other two). George moved the motions; Dana seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

Tom outlined the new Staff Advisory Council plans and said he hopes meeting regularly with representatives from all levels of staff will increase communication between he and the whole staff.

Tom thanked the staff in the Charter School Office for being helpful and for streamlining the process the renewal process. John asked if the fact that we're running a deficit an issue for the renewal process. Tom said that due to our good bond rating and having adequate funds in reserve, he wasn't expecting any issue.

Growth Update (Power Point available)

Tom reviewed a presentation on plans for expansion and reminded everyone that we welcome comments on our blog. He stated there will be lots of planning work done this fall to make a detailed plan for expanding with another K-8 school and/or a high school. He added that the school district is expected to release the modification process information in a few months. Gloria asked Tom to clarify the modification process. Tom explained that means that we would be asking to change the grade configuration and/or the number of students enrolled. When we renew our charter, it will be renewing the current program, grade configuration and enrollment.

Consent Agenda

Gloria summarized the consent agenda. Gloria read the resolutions on the consent agenda. Rebecca moved the motions; John seconded. The motions were passed unanimously.

Other Resolutions

Gloria asked Tom to give a summary of the additional resolutions. Tom explained that he recommends Keystone Staff status for ICS teacher Elisse Santiago-Droz. John moved the Keystone Staff resolution; Rebecca seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Gloria read the Approved Private School resolution. Barbara moved the motion; George seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

Gloria noted that we usually meet every-other-month; however, since we did not meet in August, we will be meeting again in October. Gloria said that at the next meeting CEO Tom will discuss his goals for the year and committee goals would also be due by next board meeting.

A member of the audience asked what the payment for an Approved Private School is. Gloria explained that we are obligated to meet each student's educational needs. Tom explained that Approved Private Schools are for students with special education needs that cannot be met by their current school. Gloria explained that some of the funds to pay for the ASP come through the state. The parent was concerned that ICS was paying for this; Gloria explained that this is the school's obligation to meet the student's educational needs.

An audience member asked about Keystone Staff status. Gloria explained that under our charter, we are allowed to have a policy to recognize staff who have been here more than two years and have contributed significantly to the school and that, when approved, the children of those staff members get admission preference over students on the general waiting list.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:11p.m.

**Independence Charter School
September 10, 2014
Resolutions**

ADOPTED

Music Grant/Philadelphia Youth Orchestra

Be it resolved that that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the \$19,990 contract with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra for after-school Instrumental Music Instruction.

21st Century Grant

Be it resolved that that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the proposed academic after-school and summer school grant through the 21st Century Federal Grant.

Ready to Learn Block Grant

Be it resolved that that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the Ready to Learn Block Grant.

Dollar General Literacy Grant

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the Dollar General Literacy Grant in the amount of \$3,199.

July Disbursements

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approves disbursements from the month of July 2014 in the amount of \$292,443.19.

Updated ICS Special Education Policies

Be it resolved that that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the updated Special Education Polices for Independence Charter School.

Updated English Language Learner Policies

Be it resolved that that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees approves the updated English Language Learner polices for Independence Charter School.

New Hires since June 11, 2014

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby approve the 2014-2015 contracts for Lacey Boland (full-time), Andrew Reid (full-time), Daisy Ling (part-time) and Esmeralda Rodriguez (part-time).

Keystone Staff Status

Be it resolved that the Independence Charter School Board of Trustees hereby awards ICS Keystone Staff status to ICS employee Elisse Santiago-Droz.

Approved Private School

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

Resolutions DEFEATED: None

Resolutions TABLED - None