

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Meeting
Charter District 4152
January 26, 2010, 6:30 p.m.
1745 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104

Call to Order and Attendance

Board Chair Andrew Oxenham called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Board Members Kim Kompel, Holly Wiste, Susanne Grimm, Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, Debra Haessly, Jürgen Konczak were present. Board Members Gretchen Nettet, Rebecca Hauth-Schmid and Ken Greener were absent.

Also present were TCGIS Director Annika Fjelstad, volunteer clerk and TCGIS parent Lisa Friedman, and other parents and guests.

A. Approval of January 26, 2010 Agenda

Moved by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn, seconded Mr. Konczak, to approve the agenda. Motion carried 7:0.

B. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of December 15, 2009 Minutes
- b. Donation register
- c. Payment register
- d. School and Board Committee Reports

Ms. Wiste raised some questions regarding wording in the December 15th minutes in the section pertaining to the Middle School Curriculum Review. It was agreed that in the second paragraph, 11th line, “problems in German fluency” should be changed to “linguistic issues”, the word “may” should replace the word “now”, and “subject matter” would be replaced with “social studies”.

Moved by Ms. Grimm, seconded by Ms. Wiste, that the consent agenda be approved with the agreed changes to the December 15, 2009 minutes. Motion carried 7:0.

C. Financial Oversight

a. Enrollment/Recruiting

The Board reviewed the current status of enrollment for next year. The number of applications for the next school year is consistent with expectations.

b. Treasurer’s Report

Ms. Haessly presented a summary of the most recent Finance Committee meeting. Due to the 27% State hold back, the school may have to access its line of credit sometime before the end of the academic year. The school has used its line of credit before and was able to quickly pay it back. There is uncertainty surrounding whether, how and when the current hold back will be repaid and what the hold back will be for the next academic year. Coupled with the FLAP grant coming to an end this year, the committee is preparing to develop several budget scenarios for the 2010-2011 budget. In order to prepare for the budget process, the committee will be annotating this year’s budget so that it is easier to read and understand.

c. 2010-2011 Budget Guidance

The Finance Committee is beginning the planning process for the 2010-2011 budget. They are looking

for guidance from the Board on priorities. The Board decided to brainstorm areas of the budget that should be looked at further. The following items were discussed:

- Increased class size
- Combining or merging classes
- Having three classes in the lower grades and then reducing to two classes in upper grades
- Full class English instruction
- Cancel or delay third language program
- Change third language to a more “grant friendly” language
- Eliminating or reducing specialists and/or offering them as electives in the upper grades
- Actively marketing use of our space during the summer
- Amity intern program
- Review staffing plan for teachers and office administration
- Staff raises
- Review lease and use of the YMCA
- Review hot lunch and K-plus programs to make sure they are paying for themselves.
- Not growing past K-5
- Professional development budget
- Substitute policy

The Board asked the Finance Committee to determine the budget implications of each brainstormed idea before the Board set any priorities. The Board was asked to provide direction to the Finance Committee in terms of whether a deficit budget would be acceptable. Recognizing that it may be difficult given the financial challenges, the board agreed that it was preferable to avoid a deficit budget if possible. The board also discussed using a survey to determine where the priorities of the school community are in order to help the board in the budget process.

D. Academic Oversight

a. Director’s Report

Ms. Fjelstad referred to her written report. She provided an update on how the school is preparing for the MCA tests. She has been trained as a District Assessment Coordinator. The teachers are working together and spreading out the student work on test preparation so that it doesn’t come all at one time. There is now an active Assessment Committee which will try to articulate the TCGIS vision and priorities for assessment, and not only look to external sources. Ms. Fjelstad indicated that TCGIS submitted an application for the Race to the Top federal grant as part of the state’s application. She, Frau Grimm and Frau Cooper will be attending a conference on Q Comp this week. Ms. Fjelstad is in the process of developing the staffing plan for next year. Discussion ensued regarding which grades were considered part of the middle school and what our ultimate vision for a fully functioning 5-8th grade looks like. Several teachers currently have planning time in their schedules for mapping out the 6th grade curriculum.

b. Mid-year Director’s review

The only school employee that reports directly to the school board is the director. Therefore the board is responsible for Ms. Fjelstad’s performance evaluation. Last year a survey of all stake-holders was used. Ms. Bostrum is assisting in creating a new survey for this year, which will be presented to the Board for review and approval at its next meeting.

E. Strategic Planning

a. Strategic Plan update

Mr. Oxenham, Ms. Kompel, and Ms. Fjelstad met with the GVC (Graduate Volunteer Consultants) team to review the strategic plan project scope and to provide background information. The GVC team has been invited to attend the Feb. 4 State of the School Address.

b. Board nominations kick-off

Ms. Kompel reported from the Governance Committee (formerly the Nominating Committee) that they are starting the Board Director nomination process. Three seats are up for election. Ms. Hauth-Schmid, Ms. Nessel, and Mr. Konczak have terms that expire this year. Ms. Nessel is term-limited from running again. The Governance Committee requested direction from the board regarding what sort of skills would be beneficial to the board as a whole. It was discussed that experience or knowledge in the education, legal, marketing, finance, legal, and human resources fields would be helpful. The board will be meeting the board composition requirements of the new charter school law (having at least one parent, one teacher, and one interested community member) at the time of the election. It was discussed that having a varied board membership is advantageous and valued and the governance committee hopes to be able to recruit some more people willing to run for election from outside the immediate school community. The election will be on May 20th.

E. Other Business

Mr. Konczak gave an update on the May public relations event (tentatively titled German American Community Day). It will be on either the 8th or the 15th, partially held at the School and partially held at GAI. He will have more details on the actual event plan next month.

Mr. Oxenham reported on the visit with Rep. Alice Hausman. She had a good introduction to the school and was particularly interested in the results of a national survey that indicated foreign language programs are decreasing across the nation.

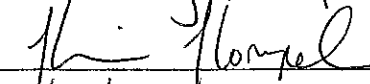
F. Adjourn

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn to adjourn at 8:37 pm. Motion carried 7:0.

Action Items:

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Secretary

Name: Kimberly Kompel

Signed: 

Date: 3/2/10

Date January 26, 2010 minutes approved by TCGIS Board: 2 | 23 | 10