

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Meeting
Charter District 4152
April 27, 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 6:35 p.m.

Board Members Kimberly Kompel, Holly Wiste, Susanne Grimm, Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, Debra Haessly, Jürgen Konczak, and Rebecca Hauth-Schmid were present. Gretchen Nessel was absent. Also present were TCGIS Director Annika Fjelstad, volunteer clerk Lisa Friedman, and other parents and guests.

A. Approval of April 27, 2010 Agenda

Mr. Oxenham suggested a few revisions to the agenda. Mr. Konczak must leave early so items b and c under Strategic Planning (School Development Plan and Update on the May 15th event) will be moved up on the agenda and come after the staff sick days/short-term disability insurance discussion. The Treasurer's report will be provided right before the budget. Mr. Oxenham will also discuss upcoming Board training opportunities under Strategic Planning. There will also be a closed session at the end of the meeting to discuss lease negotiations and a follow up on the director's performance evaluation.

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Kompel, to approve the agenda, as amended. Motion carried 8:0.

B. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of March 24th, 2010 Minutes
- b. Donation register
- c. Payment register, found in SBS packet
- d. School and Board Committee Reports

Ms. Wiste asked that the minutes be amended to reflect slightly different wording for clarification on pages 2 (not "yet" approved) and 3 (\$400 a month "for the entire staff")

Moved by Ms. Haessly, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, that the consent agenda be approved with the minutes as amended. Motion carried 8:0.

C. Financial Oversight

a. Staff sick days/short term disability insurance

Ms. Fjelstad presented a proposed policy on sick leave donation program. The policy was originally developed by the staff and presented to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee had some concerns regarding the costs of instituting such a policy and based on these concerns the policy was revised. The policy being presented to the Board has not been vetted by the Finance Committee but reflects changes that would address the concerns expressed by the committee. The Board discussed the definition of a serious medical hardship or catastrophic illness. It was determined that maternity leave did not qualify. The Board also discussed how short term disability insurance would help meet the need this policy is only partially addressing. It was discussed that perhaps this policy could be temporarily instituted until the school could develop a short term disability plan. It was discussed that

the cost of the proposed policy would be minimal. The Board discussed the pros and cons of having the donated sick leave pool expire at the end of the year. There were also concerns on how the pool would be equitable distributed. The teachers indicated they preferred the pool option as opposed to being able to donate to a specific person. Questions were raised as to the legal implications of creating a school pool vs. individual donations.

Moved by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, seconded by Ms. Grimm, to approve the policy.

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid to propose the following amendment to Item #7 " The Director shall be responsible for equitable distribution of the sick day pool." Motion carried 7:0 with one abstention.

Moved by Ms. Kompel, seconded by Ms. Grimm to propose the amendment that this policy shall expire at the end of the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Motion carried 8:0.

Moved by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, seconded by Ms. Kompel, to propose the amendment that this policy shall not be enacted until legal review is obtained and confirmed by the board chair. Motion carried 8:0.

Moved by Ms. Grimm, seconded Ms. Haessly to approve the policy as amended. Motion carried 8:0.

b. School development plan

Mr. Konczak introduced the school development plan that has been submitted to the German government. It projects the school's anticipated number of children and German language and academic achievement goals. It also includes the ideas of a possible future high school with additional achievement goals. The high school language goals would enable those students to be eligible to study at a German university. This proposal is currently under review in Koeln. There is a school in Silicon Valley which has been approved for this kind of support. The Board asked some questions related to the teacher selection process and expressed their appreciation for Mr. Konczak's work on this.

c. Update on May 15 event

Mr. Konczak updated the Board on the program planned for this event. They are still trying to confirm one of the speakers and are hoping they can do that in time for the final program to go out tomorrow. The location of the event will be split between the school and GAI. Only the GAI part will have a charge, but children are free and child care and pizza will be provided. He would like the Board to help in advertising this event as it is an important step in strengthening the relationship between the school and the GAI and GACC. The PTO will help encourage parents to attend the GAI event. There will be one person in charge of the school open house and another in charge of the GAI one. RSVP's for the event will be helpful.

Mr. Konczak left at 7:50

d. Student Enrollment/Recruiting

The Board reviewed the current status of enrollment for next year. There is a waiting list for Kindergarten and new students entering at every grade level.

e. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Haessly presented a summary of the most recent Finance Committee meeting. The March financials are projecting a positive balance for the year and the Finance Committee did not find anything unexpected in the monthly review of the financial statements. The Board asked a few

clarifying questions on the expenses.

f. Approval of Budget for 2010-2011

Ms. Haessly presented the proposed budget. The budget is not as conservative as previously presented budgets. Initially the Finance Committee was working with a budget proposal that included a 5% cut in revenues as well as conservative student ADM estimates, but given that proposed cuts would have had a significant impact on programming, the committee felt that it would be in the school's benefit to use the conservative ADM estimates but not include the 5% cut at this time. If a cut is proposed by the state legislature, then the budget would need to be re-evaluated. The budget does result in a 16.7% fund balance but does not reflect the amount of savings that was originally hoped for. Next year, all expenditures will need to be closely monitored. The proposed budget allows the school to continue with most of its core programming with the exception of music, which does not have its own line item. The school is actively looking at ways to keep music in the curriculum. The budget does not include across-the-board salary increases but does allow for some equity adjustments for longer term employees of the school who have suffered from "salary compression".

There was some concern raised regarding maintaining teacher prep times and the Director indicated she was looking into this issue. There also some concern expressed that the budget may not be conservative enough. It was discussed that the school is still pursuing ways to augment revenue, including the application to the German government that could result in the German government sponsoring one or two teaching positions. The school is also continuing its research into Q-comp. Including a cut in revenue at this point would force the school to make cuts that would affect the integrity of the program. It was acknowledged that this budget would require the school to be conservative in its spending and look for savings wherever possible. Discussion ensued regarding potential areas for savings that the Director could consider. The Board expressed their appreciation to Ms. Fjelstad and Ms. Haessley for their hard work and the clarity of presentation on the budget.

Moved by Ms. Kompel, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid to approve the FY11 budget as presented. Motion carried 7:0.

E. Strategic Planning

a. Board Training

Mr. Oxenham presented several options for meeting the legally required Board training. Of the three options, one is free. All cover the three required topics: governance, finance and employment law. It is important that the training be suitable for charter school boards. Mr. Oxenham will organize registering interested board members for the board training that is free.

b. Board elections – Announcement of Candidates

Before announcing the candidates, Ms. Kompel reminded the Board that at their last meeting they approved a new school board election policy which allows the Board to vote annually whether to hold the election by ballot during an election day or at the annual meeting. The Governance Committee is planning to run an election day this year and not have the election as part of an annual meeting.

Moved by Ms. Kompel, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn to approve that the 2010 TCGIS Board election be held by ballot on an election day, May 20, and not as part of an annual meeting. Motion carried 7:0.

Ms. Kompel announced that there will be 6 candidates for the 2010 TCGIS Board election for the 3 seats that are open. The candidates are: Eric Hauth-Schmid (parent community member), Lisa

Friedman (parent community member), Anita Ratwik (interested community member), Clinton Gerner (parent community member), Ursula Lentz (interested community member), and Renee Moelders (parent community member). The election will be held this year at the school on Thursday May 20th, 2010. The ballot box will be open on May 20th during the following time intervals:

- At drop off – 7:45am to 9:00am
- At lunch – 11:00am to 12:30pm
- At pick up – 3:00pm – 6:00pm

After the ballot box closes at 6:00 p.m, the Governance Committee will count the ballots and candidates will be told the results that evening or the next day. The winning candidates will be invited to attend the May 25th Board meeting.

d. Hiring update

Ms. Fjelstad reported to the Board that she has made several offers of employment that require Board approval.

Moved by Ms. Kompel, seconded by Ms. Grimm to approve the hiring of Esther Eufinger at 1 FTE as a Kindergarten classroom teacher for the 2011 school year. Motion carried 7:0.

Moved by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn to approve the hiring of Uli Koester at .5 FTE as a fifth grade science and German teacher for 2010-2011 school year. Motion carried 7:0.

Moved by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, to approve the hiring of Hunter Goetzman as a .4 FTE as a math teacher and recess supervisor for the 2010-2011 school year. Motion carried 7:0.

E. Academic Oversight

a. Director's Report

Ms. Fjelstad presented her report to the Board. She has discussed Q-Comp with teaching staff and Ms. Wallace is researching further what teachers would like to see included in a Q-Comp system. Three bids have been received for accounting services, including our current provider whose customer service has not been satisfactory. Ms. Fjelstad and members of the Finance Committee are reviewing the bids and conducting interviews and will be making a decision soon. There are several qualified applicants for the SAM position and the hiring process is still on-going. She has given the Technology Committee the approval to spend some of the money allocated to technology this year. Some concerns were raised that the Technology Committee may need some more input from the teachers and staff before items are purchased. Ms. Fjelstad indicated that she will serve as the school's liaison with the committee.

Ms. Fjelstad presented a proposal that addresses salary compression issues among longer serving staff. This has lead to some cases of severe inequities between newly recruited teachers and our longer-serving staff. The proposal is to offer salary increases to staff that are more than \$1,200 less than the salary they would be offered as new employees, based on our current salary scale. Based on a recommendation from the Finance Committee, the raise would be 80% of the difference between their current salary and the "new hire" salary.

Moved by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn, seconded by Ms. Wiste to approve the Finance Committee's teacher salary adjustment proposal as outlined in the Director's report. Motion carried 6:0 with one abstention.

F. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

G. Closed Session

Mr. Oxenham moved, Ms. Hauth-Schmid seconded, to close the Board meeting to discuss landlord negotiations and a follow-up to the Director's evaluation. Motion carried 7:0.

Ms. Wiste and Ms. Hauth-Schmid left at 9:05 p.m.

Mike Sampson updated the board on the discussions that have transpired with the landlord. The Board also discussed the salary that for the Director that would be offered as part of the renewal of her contract.

Mr. Oxenham re-opened the meeting at 9:40pm.

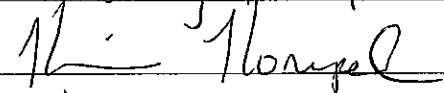
Moved by Ms. Haessley, seconded by Ms. Kompel to offer a contract renewal to Director Fjelstad. Motioned carried 5:0

H. Adjourn

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn, to adjourn at 9:50pm. Motion carried 5:0.

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Secretary

Name: Kimberly Kompel

Signed: 

Date: 6/1/10

Date April 27, 2010 minutes approved by TCGIS Board: May 25, 2010