

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Meeting  
Charter District 4152  
June 23, 2009, 6:30 p.m.  
1745 University Ave.  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

**Opening Remarks**

Andrew Oxenham called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm. Board members Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, Andrew Oxenham, Rebecca Hauth-Schmid, Holly Wiste, and Gretchen Nessel were present. Board members Ken Greener, Susanne Grimm, Kim Kompel and Jürgen Konczak were absent.

School officials Judi Ingison and Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh were present.

Also present were several parents, and prospective board member Debra Haessly.

**A. Approval of June 23, 2009 Agenda**

Mr. Oxenham suggested postponing agenda item D(a), policy approvals, until the July meeting. He then moved, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion passed, 5:0.

**B. Strategic Planning I**

*a. Welcome new board members.*

Mr. Oxenham welcomed new board members Holly Wiste, Kim Kompel, and Susanne Grimm. Holly Wiste read a message from Susanne Grimm, who was not able to be present at the meeting. Ms. Grimm's message conveyed her enthusiasm for the opportunity to serve and to work constructively with the board.

*b. Election of Board officers for 2009 – 2010.*

Mr. Oxenham moved, and Ms. Wiste seconded, that Mary Zellmer-Bruhn be appointed as the board's Vice-Chair and that Kim Kompel be appointed as Secretary for 2009-2010. The motion passed, 5:0.

Mr. Oxenham advised that Doug Franzwa had formally resigned his position as Treasurer. He introduced Debra Haessly as a candidate to serve out the rest of Mr. Franzwa's term. Mr. Oxenham moved, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, that Ms. Haessly be appointed as a board member for the remainder of Mr. Franzwa's term, and that she also be appointed as treasurer. The motion passed 5:0.

Mr. Oxenham said that Ms. Haessly was introduced to the board by TCGIS parent Silke Moeller and board member Jürgen Konczak. Ms. Haessly comes with 25 experience in managing departments and accounts at the University of Minnesota. She was interviewed by Andrew Oxenham and Doug Franzwa earlier in the week.

Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn moved, Ms. Hauth-Schmid seconded, that Andrew Oxenham be appointed as Board Chair for 2009-2010. The motion passed, 5:0.

*c. Selection of dates for board meetings for 2009 – 2010.*

Mr. Oxenham moved, seconded by Ms. Hauth-Schmid, that the board continue to meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month, with the exceptions identified in the distributed list (July 30, September 29, and December 15, 2009). The motion passed, 6:0 (now including Ms. Haessly).

### **C. Consent Agenda**

The consent agenda was:

- a. Approval of May 26, 2009 Minutes.
- b. Approval of June 4, 2009 Minutes.
- c. Donation register
- d. Payment register – found in SBS packet
- e. Committee Update Brief
- f. Enrollment/Recruiting Update

### **Discussion:**

*Minutes:* Ms. Wiste suggested two amendments to the minutes: (1) the statement that inventory would be taken should be revised to indicate that it is already underway; and (2) that the hiring report regarding the full-time special education appointment be changed from “is in the process of getting her special education masters degree” to “is currently enrolled in a special education masters program”.

*Donation register:* Ms. Wiste said that the donation register should indicate that the \$776 and \$300 gift cards are being donated by the Library Committee, rather than Barnes & Noble. Ms. Ingison asked that the correct donor information be relayed to Sharon Willson for processing. Gretchen Nessel recommended that the Library Committee consider a book fair through the Wild Rumpus book store next year; the owners have expressed enthusiasm about working with TCGIS.

*Committee Updates:* Andrew Oxenham noted that there was no Committee brief this month. He reviewed the current slate of committees and their chairs:

- *Finance Committee*, now chaired by Debra Haessly;
- *Grants Committee*, to be chaired again by Jürgen Konczak upon his return;
- *Facilities Committee*: now chaired by Kim Korpel.
- *Governance Committee*: Andrew Oxenham pointed out that the board must overhaul its bylaws to be compliant with new state laws, and he intends to ask Ken Greener to help.
- *Technology Committee*: Andrew Oxenham said that moving forward it would be helpful to have greater organizational and financial coordination through a distinct committee, which Holly Wiste had agreed to chair. Andrew Oxenham moved to create the Technology Committee. Mary Zellmer-Bruhn seconded; the motion passed, 6:0.
- *High School Steering Committee*: Ms. Hauth-Schmid reminded the board of its discussion at last year’s retreat about forming this committee. Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins has agreed to help, and Ms. Hauth-Schmid now intends to move ahead. Ms. Wiste observed that parents need to know where TCGIS kids can go after 8<sup>th</sup> grade if our middle school is to succeed; otherwise, we will start to lose kids after elementary school.
- Ms. Ingison suggested reminding all chairs that they must submit timely committee updates so that the Secretary can place them in the board packet.

*Enrollment:* Ms. Ingison reviewed a table, included in the board packet, that tracks school enrollment by grade according to various categories. At present, total enrollment for next year stands at 209 students, 207 of them confirmed. Of the 50

enrolled for kindergarten, 12 are half-day. Ms. Ingison reported that we have been moving steadily through the waiting list. She clarified that there are only 19 students for 5<sup>th</sup> grade, rather than the 20 noted in the table. She reminded the board that it granted permission to the director to overload sections under some circumstances.

Ms. Ingison noted that the budget is based on 19 students, but that the school uploaded our "real" number for the July payment in order to avoid being underpaid. She was unsure how the situation would play out with the State, as our per-pupil is lower because of our kindergarten numbers. The school had to submit its budgeted number as part of its lease aid; Mike Shapiro assured Ms. Ingison that even if our numbers were higher than budgeted we would receive the money eventually. Ms. Ingison said that this illustrates why it can be a problem to be too conservative in budgeting, and that we will have to hope that the State does not hold us to the lower lease aid numbers.

Ms. Ingison said that class groupings would remain the same except for kindergarten, which would be remixed consistent with past practice. Ms. Hauth-Schmid suggested it would be nice to find a way to put the two classes from each grade together, perhaps for things like lunch and recess, so that the kids from each class can get to know each other better. Ms. Ingison said that this caused problems on the playground this year.

Mr. Oxenham moved, seconded by Ms. Nessel, that the Consent Agenda be approved as amended. The motion passed, 6:0.

#### **D. Strategic Planning I**

##### *a. Hot Lunch Contract*

In Kate Wagner's absence, Andrew Oxenham directed the board to the proposed contract with Done Right Foods in the meeting packet. Ms. Ingison said that the school will have to work out kitchen-sharing arrangement with Lancer Hospitality, which will continue as Avalon's lunch provider. There was general enthusiasm expressed for the selection of Done Right Foods. Mr. Oxenham moved, Ms. Nessel seconded, to approve the school lunch contract with Done Right Foods for the 2009-2010 year. The motion passed, 6:0.

##### *b. Technology Plan*

Holly Wiste reviewed the draft Technology Plan in the board packet, noting that the first version was submitted to the State as part of TCGIS's eligibility for the technology grant and other awards. The State recommended two changes: (1) adding a policy on internet use to be signed by parents, children and staff; and (2) a budget. TCGIS's current budget does not presently include a line item for technology, and Ms. Wiste urged the board to consider how to strategically plan to add that funding to the formal budget. The Technology Plan's budget imported the numbers from the recent technology grant; we will know whether that grant is approved in the next week or so. Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh said that even if TCGIS does not receive the technology grant, the FLAP grant includes enough money for additional laptops.

Ms. Ingison suggested reviewing the internet use policy against the MSBA's recommended policy, and conditioning any approval of the Technology Plan upon revising the internet policy to align with MSBA policy. Ms. Wiste emphasized that the Technology Plan would be a living document, subject to changes as it evolves.

Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn asked how passage of the Plan would impact the school budget. Ms. Wiste explained that the Plan would not be binding; rather, implementation would be dependent on securing the additional funding from grants, etc. The Plan describes what the school would like to implement, if adequate funding is found. There was discussion about the need to avoid any appearance that the school is making promises by adopting the Plan. Mr. Oxenham suggested adding specific language to the Plan that implementation is subject to funding. Andrew Oxenham moved, seconded by Rebecca Hauth-Schmid, that the Technology Plan be adopted, with the addition of this language and subject to review of the internet policy against MSBA recommendations. The motion passed 6:0.

Mr. Oxenham thanked Ms. Wiste for her work on the Plan.

*c. Transition Discussion*

Mr. Oxenham reported that the transition team is in place and has been meeting regularly. Team members are Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins, Stefanie Berres, Michael Dorneich, Susanne Grimm, Judi Ingison, and Andrew Oxenham. Ms. Bausman-Watkins will be the point person during the transition period, which will run from June 27 through July 20. She has agreed to do this work for 10 hours per week on a volunteer basis. Mr. Oxenham suggested that the school should compensate her as for hours in excess of 10 per week, given the importance of having a paid staff person, even if temporary, to serve as a point person during this time. Andrew Oxenham moved, and Gretchen Nettet seconded, to offer Ms. Bausman-Watkins a consultancy paid at \$35 per hour for any hours worked in excess of 10 per week, not to exceed 30 hours per week, through July 31. The motion passed 6:0.

**E. Financial Oversight**

*a. Treasurer's Report*

Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn offered the Treasurer's report on behalf of the Finance Committee. Spending continues to be slightly ahead of revenue because of the many front-loaded expenses this year, so that we continue to show a loss, but as measured against the budget the school should end up with a fund balance of \$27,210. Cash flow begins to dip into negative territory on June 16, at which point the school will access its line of credit. We have transferred our accounts to Park Midway Bank and have secured a \$90K line of credit.

The report's new format offers a snapshot view of grants, revealing what has been expensed in the current fiscal year and what remains. The STEM and World Language grants end in June, but Ms. Ingison confirmed that as long as the funds have been "encumbered" by then, they can be used to pay the designated expenses. She has submitted additional payroll expenses for approval through the World Language grant and we are awaiting approval from the State. The teachers and Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh have produced lists of supplies so that we can seek funding for those items. Through the STEM grant, the school hired a science consultant from St. Paul School District at a cost of \$900. He was contracted to provide a basic science curriculum framework, selected lab activities, and a materials list based on the Menck science topics and the 2009 Minnesota state standards. Through the World Language grant funding we were able to purchase \$7,000 in new books for the library. Ms. Zachmeier-

Ruh has been working on obtaining the materials requested by teachers, and we may also be able to use some of the funding for storage for the new classrooms.

Ms. Wiste asked about using STEM grants for purchasing digital microscopes, which would cost \$1700 for 10. Ms. Ingison said that the science consultant capped new material costs at \$8,000 but has said that we could add more. There was agreement that it may be appropriate to seek funding for digital microscopes from GIEF, but that we should wait for input from the new science teacher.

Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn discussed the impact of the Governor's increase of the holdback amount from 10% to 27%. Our budget only anticipated a worst-case scenario of a 17% holdback, and so the Finance Committee will have to discuss how to deal with the significant negative impact to cash flow. The Park Midway Bank line of credit expires in November; presumably they will extend another. Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn noted that this development underscores the prudence of the decision to cut the school budget by 10%. The 27% holdback will take effect with the first payment in July.

Mary Zellmer-Bruhn explained that the holdback is essentially the state's way of managing cash by delaying its funding payments to schools. The state is on a cash basis, while the school operates on an accrual basis, so the impact on our cash flow is significant. The school does receive the funding eventually, in the first few months of the following school year, but it must be careful to manage cash flow and have lines of credit in place to bridge the gap. Ms. Ingison said that historically the highest holdback rate was 17%; this rate obviously exceeds that.

## **F. Academic Oversight**

### *a. SOPA Tests Summarized*

Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh invited questions on the SOPA results that were provided in the board packet. SOPA stands for Student Oral Proficiency Assessment, a test that has been conducted at TCGIS for the last three years by Karin Cuerden and Phyllis Blee. This year's results confirm that our students are showing growth in their language skills. Under SOPA's ranking system, "Novice" level means recognizing words and phrases. "Intermediate" means the speaker can create with language and make new sentences; "Intermediate High" is where a foreign language college major should be when they graduate. "Advanced Low" is what a teacher must achieve for a foreign language teacher license. The SOPA is a junior version of the ACTFL (American Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) foreign language Oral Proficiency Interview. It has the same linguistic components, but different content to reflect that the test-takers are children. Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh explained that it would be very difficult for a native German kindergartener to get to "Advanced High" because most simply don't have the cognitive ability. Some native children speakers may score lower than a non-native speaker who is very verbal.

TCGIS has no children in the "None" category now; we had 16 at the beginning of the year. We have some kids moving into the Advanced-Mid range. The PM kindergarten has more kids in the higher ranges than AM because they are here all day long. At the beginning of the year 9 spoke no German; all went into the Novice Low and Novice Mid. The 1A and 1B advancement was less, which may reflect that we have an incredibly verbose kindergarten class.

law, all board members must receive training within one year of taking office on roles and responsibilities, financial oversight, human resources and employment law and policy. MACS will be organizing training sessions throughout the year, many of them available via webinar. The Charter School Law Conference is set for August 12 in St. Paul; several people from TCGIS are attending. Board members would have to pay the \$75 fee themselves. Mr. Oxenham also advised board members that Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins, Michael Dorneich, Nancy Bostrom, and Mike Sampson have offered to come to the board retreat to give an overview of training and issues on board service.

**Acknowledgement of Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh and Judi Ingison.** Mr. Oxenham noted that this meeting would mark Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh's final meeting as Director of Curriculum; although sad to see her leave that role, the board was glad to have her join the 5<sup>th</sup>-grade classroom. He thanked Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh for her help in founding TCGIS, which wouldn't be here without her dedication, drive and enthusiasm. Mr. Oxenham also offered his thanks to Judi Ingison for stepping in to the director's position at a precarious time and for seeing us through, and leaving us in good shape.

**Additional grants.** The board was advised that the Dupree Foundation had given a \$2,000 grant to TCGIS to support the playground development. Judi Ingison advised that TCGIS has received notice from Germany that the school will receive an additional grant for the 2008-2009 school year, in the amount of an additional 15,000 Euros.

**Parent Communication.** Parent Liane Gale asked about next year's parent liaison, and Mr. Oxenham said that Kim Kompel would serve in that role. He will issue an announcement to the community concerning all of the new board officers and their roles. He explained that the parent liaison's role is to serve as parents' first contact with the board, and to broadcast the board's activities to parents. Ms. Nessel observed that the board the role of parent liaison will be even more important as we move forward. There was discussion that the parent liaison is not the sole bridge between the board and parents, and that parents should continue to feel able to contact any board member. Kimberly Feilmeyer suggested that the board convey information about our new treasurer to the parent community, as well as an explanation of the reason for her appointment instead of election.

Holly Wiste said that the board could consider webcasting its meetings. Ms. Gale said that she would like to see more opportunities for the community to talk to the board in an open forum. Ms. Nessel said that the "us" and "them" mentality of this year has been disheartening, though understandable. Gina Vader mentioned that the PTO will be helping to organize a "Meet the Board" event in the fall.

## **I. Adjourn**

Mr. Oxenham moved, Ms. Nessel seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5:0. The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Next Regular Board Meeting: July 30, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

The scores start to become exciting in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. A few students are in Novice, but they all moved up. A couple Grade 3 students are in Intermediate and the bulk are Advanced-Mid. Grade 4 has some late entries and a couple special, but the vast majority are in the Advanced range. This year we had to “beef up” the SOPA test because there were a couple dozen kids who topped out of the standard scale.

Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh acknowledged that, while these are good trends, we also know that some of our 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are having difficulty doing workbook work in the German texts. Our goal must be to move all kids into the necessary range so that they can do the written work. SOPA is an oral and listening test; we have yet to identify a good comprehensive tool for reading and writing. Next year we will use a German test, the Stolperlesetest, to track progress in reading fluency from grade to grade. Currently we use a surface-level test to identify learning problems, but it tops out at a young age.

Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh thanked Karin Cuerden and Phyllis Blees for the assistance that they have given in conducting these assessments for the last three years, which has afforded great consistency to the process.

Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh also reviewed results for the Hamburger Schreib-Probe, a phonetics and spelling test conducted for grades 1-4. The test is not tracked individually by student, but it does reflect that the ranges have moved up significantly. Average scores per class have gone up, with similar improvements in the two 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade classes, which suggests that both classes are improving at similar rates. Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh noted that the report provided in the board packet included some inaccurate figures, and she would provide a corrected version next month. Mr. Oxenham suggested it might be helpful to have the scores reported in a standardized way that allows for easier comparison, such as the scores at the 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, and 75<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh agreed.

She also noted that the school results for the MCAs be available on July 1, with individual scores to following in mid-September. An update on that, as well as remaining test results, will be delivered at the July board meeting.

## **G. Strategic Planning**

- a. *Policy approvals [deferred]*
- b. *Hiring Update.*

Ms. Ingison advised that the only the part-time English position remains open. TCGIS did extend an offer to someone, but he accepted a full-time contract elsewhere. Ms. Bausman-Watkins will work on filling the position during July. We must also post a half-time Special Ed position to replace Elena Heindl, who is moving into kindergarten, as well as a full-time German-speaking para position.

Contracts for the other positions have been signed and returned. Three teachers are coming via Checkpoint Charlie. Marlene Heider, the Austrian teacher, has a sponsorship through Amity, limited to just one year because of her relative inexperience. TCGIS is consulting with an immigration attorney from Lindquist & Venum to determine what it would take for TCGIS to become a sponsor in its own right. That process that will probably cost \$5K to \$6K. We currently pay \$800 per year to Amity per person. Mr. Oxenham suggested that the Finance Committee should take a closer look at these costs. Ms. Ingison explained that once TCGIS has a sponsoring

number, we can sponsor our own employees, rather than relying on Amity. The immigration attorney advises that employers typically pay all of the associated costs, rather than separating "employer" from employee costs. This year's cost is \$1,000 more because we started the process late

*Action item: Ask Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins to update the Finance Committee on the associated costs with sponsoring teachers.*

Ms. Ingison advised that none of the candidates that Ms. Nettet and Ms. Hauth-Schmid sent forward has applied. The school is seeking someone with middle-school English Language Arts licensure. The position is now posted on the U of M site. Ms. Nettet suggested looking at the candidate who is currently working in Peru. She has strong social studies background, and so would be appropriate for humanities, and is currently working on her Master's and so is available for part-time work.

Ms. Wiste asked for clarification on how the search and hiring process will work after Ms. Ingison's departure. Mr. Oxenham indicated that the transition team will oversee, while Ms. Bausman-Watkins will step into Ms. Ingison's role on the interview team. Ms. Nettet mentioned that her school district is currently redoing its English curriculum and would like to include humanities, but is having difficulty overcoming the entrenched approach. TCGIS has an opportunity to be innovative on that front from the inception of the middle-school program.

Ms. Ingison raised the need for a financial manager for the K-Plus program who can oversee the paperwork and state filings, so that those who qualify for state aid can receive it, as well as the separate accounting system for handling the K plus payments. She suggested that Gwendolyn Stengel, who already knows this process from Kinder Klub, might be a candidate. She proposed entering into a contract with Ms. Stengel for 60 hours in July at \$15/hour, and then asking the Finance Committee to look at hiring her in a half-time position for 44 weeks at \$15/hour, with holiday weeks not paid, after July. Ms. Wiste asked if it was necessary to post the position; Ms. Ingison said that it was not, because it is administrative and because we have a pressing need. Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn suggested that it would be appropriate to hire Ms. Stengel for July on a contract basis, and then to follow normal procedures for filling the position after that. Mr. Oxenham noted that there is a great deal of work to do, beginning with determining what the K-Plus cost will actually be.

Ms. Wiste observed that as the school grows, we should be looking at ways in which the administration must expand to meet our needs. Even now, we could benefit from an accountant who could oversee grants, payroll, etc. There was agreement that this would be an appropriate topic for the board retreat.

Ms. Hauth-Schmid left the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Mr. Oxenham made a motion, Ms. Wiste seconded, to hire Gwendolyn Stengel on a contract basis for the month of July not to exceed 60 hours at a rate of \$16 hour. The motion passed, 5:0.

Mr. Oxenham also moved, Ms. Wiste seconded, to hold the board retreat on Saturday, August 29, at a place TBD. The motion passed, 5:0.

#### **H. Other Business (5 min)**

##### **Authorizations:**

Ms. Ingison noted the need to update the authorizations at Park Midway Bank to

reflect the new board chair and treasurer. The authorizations were as follows:

1. Authorize the Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) to sign all documents for the purchase of insurance to insure deposits in excess of \$100,000.
2. Assign authority to the Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) to accept and release collateral.
3. Assign authority to the Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) to sign checks, signature cards and other forms and documents as required by Park Midway Bank.
4. Designate as signers on the school's primary checking account Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly).
5. Designate as signers on the school's savings account Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly).
6. Authorize Park Midway Bank to accept facsimile of signatures of the Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) upon checks from TCGIS funds in accordance with M.S. 47.41.
7. Assign authority to Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) to provide facsimiles of signatures for electronic placement of signatures on checks from TCGIS.
8. Delegate authority to Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly) to make electronic funds transfers (wire transfers) as permitted by M.S. 471.38 and submit a list of such transfers at the next regular TCGIS School Board meeting after the transfers take place, as presented.
9. Authorize the use of a savings account and delegate authority to manually or electronically transfer funds to and from the school's savings account to the school's primary checking account to Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly).
10. Authorize use of the advancing line of credit and delegate the authority to make transfers from the line of credit to the school's primary checking account to Board Chair (Andrew Oxenham) and Treasurer (Debra Haessly).
11. Authorize view access to all TCGIS accounts at Park Midway Bank to Emily Woolsey of School Business Solutions or her designee.

*All of these effective beginning on July 1.*

Ms. Haessly said that she recently went through a background check with the State of Minnesota as well as a federal background check prior to working on census, and has held signing power at University of Minnesota. Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn added that Ms. Haessly interviewed with the previous treasurer and the board chair. She ran the department budget at the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Minnesota and in other U of M offices, and also has grant-writing experience.

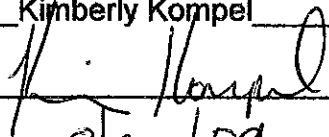
Mr. Oxenham moved, Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn seconded, to adopt the authorizations as stated. The motion passed, 5:0.

**Board training.** Andrew Oxenham reminded members that under the new state

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Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Secretary

Name: Kimberly Koppel

Signed: 

Date: 8/24/09

Date June 23, 2009 minutes approved by TCGIS Board: 07/29/2009

Date June 23, 2009 minutes sent to MN Dept. of Education: \_\_\_\_\_