

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Meeting
Charter District 4152
August 25, 2009, 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 6:41 p.m. Board Members Andrew Oxenham, Kim Kompel, Holly Wiste, Gretchen Nessel, Ken Greener, Jürgen Konczak, Susanne Grimm, Mary Zellmer-Bruhn, and Debra Haessly were present. Board member Rebecca Hauth-Schmid was absent. Also present were TCGIS Director Annika Fjelstad and volunteer clerk and TCGIS parent Lisa Friedman.

A. Approval of August 25, 2009 Agenda

Mr. Oxenham updated the agenda to add the renewal of the school's membership with the Minnesota Assn. of Charter Schools (MACS). *Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn to accept the agenda as amended. Motion carried 9:0.*

B. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of July 29th, 2009 Minutes
- b. Donation register
- c. Payment register
- d. Committee Update Brief
- e. Close out of STEM and World Language Grant.

It was suggested that the Committee Update be moved out of the consent agenda. *Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Kompel that the consent agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried 9:0.*

Mr. Oxenham indicated that the Board must approve a renewal of our membership in MACS.. The Board discussed the benefits of MACS membership including updates on legislation, information on how new laws affect the school, and individual consultation on by-laws. Access to information for members on the MACS website should be available and those interested should contact Sharon Willson for the login password. *Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Wiste, that the school renew its membership in the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools. Motion carried 9:0.*

C. Financial Oversight

a. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Debra Haessly reported that at the last Finance Committee meeting, roles, responsibilities, and timelines were reviewed. In brief, the committee oversees the ongoing cash flow, prepares the budget, reviews and revises the current-year budget in October and monitors three-year budget projections. The budgeting process for the following fiscal year begins in January. . SBS (School Business Solutions) is represented on the committee and prepares reports to the State for TCGIS and monitors that the school is in compliance with state regulations. The Finance Committee will be taking minutes this year in compliance with the open meeting law. Financials and the Treasurer's report are a part of the monthly board meetings. Ms. Haessly chairs the committee and Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn has agreed to take minutes for the Finance Committee.

It was noted that several committees would like a primer on the open meeting law and what it means

for their operation and communication. A review of the roles and responsibilities of the various committees is scheduled for the Board Retreat on Saturday, August 29.

There was a discussion related to the information in the financial reports including the fund balance, grant administration, and budget outlook. Based on the discussion related to grant administration, Ms. Haessly agreed to put the issue on the agenda for the Finance Committee, consult with Ms. Fjelstad and report back to the Board.

Ms. Haessly reported that there were a few questionable items in the preliminary results of the audit report, including the need for clearer guidelines for the use of the school debit card and making sure that payroll/service contracts are signed by all parties. These are currently being addressed. However, any firm conclusions would wait until the finalized audit report was received and presented to the Board.

Ms. Haessly concluded her update by indicating that the Finance Committee will be reviewing and revising the current-year budget beginning in October.

b. Insurance Update

Ms. Fjelstad summarized her written report in the Board Packet regarding the different insurance options. She has learned more since the report, and has discussed the issue with the Finance Committee. The school's insurance broker is coming on Thursday to present and compare different plans. She will invite those employees who are interested in attending to come. She would like to hear from staff how the options would affect their family, but recognizes that she will make the decision. She has four options now, but expects to have 12 options from which to choose. Ms. Fjelstad asked for clarification regarding the savings expected by the board, considering the cost of our current medical insurance plan will increase by 13% this year. There was a discussion regarding how the current insurance plan works and possible ways to reduce costs including pooling with other schools. There was also discussion related to how the school's change in its health insurance policy would affect returning staff. Our current coverage ends Oct. 1 and a decision on a new provider must be made by Sept. 15. Employees will pay a percentage of their own individual cost, instead of an averaged amount. It was agreed that the goal for cost savings is 10% less than what our current plan premium would be if renewed.

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Nettet, that no returning teacher should suffer a net loss in income based upon changes in insurance policy. Motion carried with 8 votes and 1 abstention.

After further discussion and concern about the vagueness of the wording, this motion was rescinded:

Moved by Mr. Oxenham, seconded by Ms. Zellmer-Bruhn, to strike the previous motion. Motion carried 9:0.

Moved by Ms. Kompel, seconded by Mr. Oxenham, that the Board direct the administration to offset, in part, for returning staff the employee portion of the insurance premiums. Motion carried with 8 votes and 1 abstention.

c. FLAP Update

Ms. Fjelstad updated the Board on what she has learned regarding the administration of the FLAP grant. She did contact FLAP and had received confirmation that there is some flexibility in how the grant money is spent and in the timelines for meeting some of the required provisions of the grant. It was discussed that staff should be informed of grant conditions that affect them in a timely and clear manner.

D. Strategic Planning

a. Hiring Update

Ms. Fjelstad reported that she has offered a .39 position to Katie Stevens (approved last meeting). She has also made other offers, which need Board approval.

Moved by Andrew Oxenham, seconded by Holly Wiste, to hire Christine Burbach at \$13/hour with a total salary over the year not to exceed \$18,000. Passed 9:0.

She also hired Ms. Zachmeier-Ruh to do the school schedule this summer, as she has done in past years.

Moved by Andrew Oxenham, seconded by Juergen Konczak to hire Marcy Zachmeier-Ruh at \$20/hour not to exceed 35 hours. Passed 9:0.

She has also hired someone to assist with assembling the new classroom furniture and hanging bulletin boards.

Moved by Andrew Oxenham, seconded by Jürgen Konczak to hire Joel Willson at \$10/hour not to exceed 80 hours. Passed 9:0.

The Board discussed service contracts for hourly employees. A few clarification questions were asked regarding the status of the special education staff hiring. There was a discussion about future hiring protocols and the Board's role in determining staffing needs. Ms. Fjelstad indicated that the hiring was complete for the year except for recess and lunchtime positions. Mary-Fred Bausman-Watkins is working on the processing of licensing variances. The new third grade teacher is still waiting for visa approval. An experienced substitute teacher is on hand to begin the year.

b. Enrollment/Recruiting Update

Ms. Fjelstad reported that our enrollment is at 198. Kindergarten enrollment is now exactly at the target of 22 students per class, with a waiting list. The 4th Grade is still a little larger than targeted, but it was deemed important to place new students at their correct grade level rather than in the class that had more space.

c. Policy Approvals

i. Change in 406 (Data Privacy)

Moved by Andrew Oxenham, seconded by Gretchen Nessel, to change the name of the director in policy 406 from Judi Ingison to School Director. Motion carried 9:0.

ii. Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Fjelstad reported that we are not required to say the pledge of allegiance in our school, but if we choose not to, the Board is required by law to review this decision annually. Her understanding is that our policy was intended to be more nuanced than it states. Originally it was thought that the pledge would be introduced with the start of English instruction. The Board discussed the policy and how it is currently being implemented. It was generally agreed that the pledge of allegiance and flag protocol should be implemented into the curriculum.

Action Item: Ms. Fjelstad will consult with staff and bring forth a revised policy for Board approval.

d. Procedure for making offers to new employees

Ms. Fjelstad presented a proposed hiring protocol for comment with the goal of greater shared clarity. Discussion entailed defining the Board's role in the hiring process. There were some concerns expressed that the Board should be providing oversight to the larger hiring picture and hiring

philosophy. It was also acknowledged that the Board entrusts the Director to run the school and that hiring staff is largely an operational issue. There was also discussion related to parent involvement on hiring committees. It was agreed that salary information should be included in the information presented to the Board prior to asking for its approval. The consensus was that the proposed hiring protocol was very helpful.

e. Committee Updates

i. Technology Committee

Ms. Wiste referred to her written minutes of the recent committee meetings. There has been a significant shift in the platform direction they had been heading in. It is now thought that they should get their current technology fully working with the needed software, before making further purchases. They are searching for 8 or 9 unaccounted for laptops. Ms. Fjelstad offered to assist with this. Ms. Wiste reported that there was much debate about which platform to order, which became somewhat heated. Now that the FLAP grant has been extended, the pressure to place an order is off and they can give the decision more time. She noted that the technology committee had a number of highly dedicated and talented members, and a lot is being accomplished. The new website is progressing well, but it will not be released until it has been thoroughly tested.

f. Outdoor concept plan approval

Ms. Kompel presented the concept plan as Board Member and chair of the Facilities Committee. The plan includes a berm area, a rain garden, boulders instead of a fallen tree, an outdoor sitting area, and some new trees. The Facilities Committee has reviewed the concept plan and provided feedback to the landscape architect including reducing the turf area, retaining the existing garden boxes and bike racks, and creating hardscape space for games like hopscotch. The concept plan will also be available for review and comment at the open house. The \$2000 from the PTO has paid for this concept plan. The cost estimate is \$9,900, but does not include labor. There is also \$2000 from the DuPree Foundation. Ms. Kompel will be presenting the concept plan to Avalon School this week. Based on estimated timelines, it is possible work could begin in October. Discussion ensued on possible fund-raising options. The Board was very positive and there was consensus that the plan should be promoted. Board members expressed their appreciation for the hard work the plan represents.

E. Other Business

a. H1N1 procedures

No comments were added.

F. Adjourn

Moved by Ms. Nessett, seconded by Ms. Wiste, to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 p.m. Motion carried 9:0.

Next Regular Board Meeting: September 29, 6:30 p.m.

Action Items from the August 25 Board Meeting:

Annika Fjelstad:

1) Consult with the English staff and bring forth a more up-to-date policy on the Pledge of Allegiance.

Debra Haessly:

1) Consult with the Finance Committee and Ms. Fjelstad regarding suggestions for a better Grant oversight procedure.

Twin Cities German Immersion School Board Secretary

Name: Kimberly Kompe

Signed: *Kim Kompe*

Date: 10/05/2009

Date August 25, 2009 minutes approved by TCGIS Board: 9/29/09