

ISL Board of Trustees Meeting
December 19, 2007
ISL Library

I Call to Order 7:10 PM

Board members present: Grant, Rico, Karen, Marc, Dottie, Sean

II Approval of November 28, 2007 minutes

Grant Ligon motion to accept minutes of November 2007 as amended; seconded by Karen. Unanimous passage.

III Governance committee: nominates Karen Dwyer to take over as interim president for remainder of Tonya Morrow's term. Unanimous approval.

IV Head of School report:

- **At** recent meeting of OPSB facility meeting we were granted support to take over and renovate the **caretaker's** cottage on Euterpe; full Orleans Parish School Board approved this last night, but we are waiting on RSD for final approval. Sean believes we need to go ahead and begin architectural planning and other preliminary steps for renovations-- even though these issues are not yet fully resolved--because we fully expect RSD to go along with us. There is also a separate question (to be decided by both OPSB and RSD) about whether or not ISL will get long-term ownership of the property. With use of the cottage, we get three classrooms out of the main building (music, art and circus arts classes); this will generate enough space in the building to avoid trailers next year.
- Have held meetings with French Consulate General as well as Marie Kellerman of Audubon and Cissy Rowley of Ecole Bilingue about possible French high school. French General Consulate wants to know who can get a school up and running the quickest. French Consulate is meeting with diplomatic staff about getting support for a French High School in New Orleans. Discussion recognized that ISL has most promising path forward for a high school given nature of our charter.
- Academics: all the teachers have been observed; we have begun thinking about middle and primary years programs' curricula from IBO. We are already using some pieces of this curriculum. This will be discussed at next education committee meeting.
- Development: family annual fund continues with support of Annual Fund Committee ; family participation currently at 24%. Have had several good tours in last month, including Robin Robert. Very successful tour and cocktail party with Clark Murdock. We have been awarded a Fellow from Cowan Institute. Fellow will develop a community volunteer program to bring in retired professionals for tutoring, tech support, etc. EdLine web interface should be up and running on January 28. ISL had applied to Goldring Foundation to seek support for cottage renovations, but turned down; looking for additional funds. Continue to work with Fund Development consultant from LANO; she will be contacting Karen and Grant. Question: what is status on Global Green funding? Answer: Global Green has identified some repairs to roof which need to be completed

before we can receive the solar arrays involved in the subsequent grant. Question: does Global Green handle permitting etc. if we win the larger grant? Answer: yes.

- Plans for next school year: will only add 4 K classes next year to fit within current facility and to avoid too much imbalance in the languages. Expect to add 88 new students, which will create a net gain of about 70 new students given some attrition at higher levels. Projected population next year of about 515 students.
- Use of Blackbaud accounting software to replace Quick Books. Expect this to save us 12 hours on reporting requirements every quarter and 16 hours in annual reporting time. Several other charter schools in the area also use this software, as does the Charter School Leadership Committee.
- Collecting feedback from current faculty and staff to begin budgeting and preparation for next year. Budgeting for next year will begin in January to submit preliminary budget to the state by May 31.

IV Committee Reports

Governance committee:

- Recent focus of governance committee has been focused on recruiting “wealth” components of board membership.
- Looking forward to working with the new Tulane fellow to further develop.

Education committee

High School Partnership

Sean Wilson and I met with administrators at Lusher High School on December 4th to discuss a possible high school partnership and to tour their facility.

Lusher administrators were enthusiastic about working with ISL—both because they support our mission and because they see opportunities for mutual benefit. At a minimum, we believe it will be possible for us to negotiate an agreement allowing otherwise qualified ISL students (i.e., admissible under the Lusher admissions matrix and living in Orleans Parish) to be fast-tracked for admission to Lusher.

We viewed this as a promising first conversation, but problematic in at least three respects:

- 1) Not all ISL students will meet Lusher admissions standards, based on their existing matrix
- 2) Not all ISL students live in Orleans Parish (currently about 70% live in Orleans)
- 3) It’s not clear that students entering Lusher under this agreement would maintain a firm connection to ISL, or that they would graduate with an ISL degree. We believe Lusher entered this conversation looking for a high-quality feeder school to ensure their own access to good incoming students.

Additional concerns:

- 1) Lusher administrators would also have some concerns about making staffing and other decisions in order to accommodate our students on a temporary basis, assuming ISL is en route to opening an independent high school.

- 2) Many Lusher middle school students begin taking high school classes in 8th grade, a practice which allows them to take classes at Tulane as juniors and seniors in high school. ISL students may not be able to take advantage of these opportunities given our current middle school curriculum.

Contrary to our previous impression, Lusher does *not* have empty classrooms, so “renting space” to ISL is not an option.

We agreed to send data describing the specific students who might be interested in participating in a Lusher-ISL partnership and get back in touch shortly.

A meeting is scheduled with Ben Franklin administrators on Wed. 12/19. Additional meetings will be held with 2-4 other area high schools, including one or more in Jefferson Parish.

International Baccalaureate curriculum

Sean, Melanie, and Karen attended a two-day training in IBO curriculum. Note there are two IBO HS's in Jefferson Parish; IBO curriculum to be discussed at next Education committee meeting (1/9/08).

Independent HS committee

The Education Committee views the most feasible scenario for opening an independent high school to involve a roughly **ten-year** process: first, ISL would replicate its existing K-8 model in at least 1 and possibly 2-3 additional locations in the greater metro area (North Shore, West Bank, East Jefferson). Once 2-4 separate K-8 immersion programs are established, it would be far easier to populate an independent high school consisting of advanced language students.

NOTE: The committee believes there is support for replication along these lines at the state level, and **it** recommends that the Board seriously consider this option.

A meeting was held on Dec. 12 of the Independent High School subcommittee, with 21 parents in attendance. I opened the meeting by reviewing the history of our effort to open a high school: this is something the Board and the school community has also looked forward to, but frankly planning has not progressed very much—**partly** as a result of high turnover on the board, and partly as a result of Katrina. We must get on this immediately if we want to see it happen! I then laid **out** core questions the Education Committee has identified about a high school:

- Where will the school be located?
- How will it be funded and maintain financial viability; what is the business plan?
- What will the curriculum be?
- How will the school relate to the current ISL; will it operate under the existing charter or a new charter?
- Is there sufficient demand in the city to populate an additional **high-quality** high school?

An open discussion followed, touching on the following points:

- An ISL high school could offer language classes to non-ISL students on a fee-for-service basis (continuing education, etc.). An intensive language summer camp for new students may also be an option. Fee-based pre-school would also be a potential source of income (there is a one-year waiting list for area pre-schools).
- Other public high schools in Orleans Parish do not offer an IBO degree option; this may be a market niche an ISL high school could fill.
- Perhaps ISLHS could have one or more partnerships with universities in the city (Tulane, UNO, Loyola, Xavier).
- Discussion of market for an ISLHS: Both Franklin and Lusher are under-subscribed; this raises a real concern about demand in the city. On the other hand, there are several **are [omit]** language immersion lower schools (Hynes, Audubon, Ecole Bilingue), **and** these students will be a natural market. ISL would have an advantage over Lusher and Franklin in our ability to recruit from all 7 metro area parishes.
- Must also think about how to market ISL high school to potential parents.
- Facilities:
- Financing: discussion of the fact that the state's MFP will not be adequate to run the high school; only covers about $\frac{3}{4}$ of ISL's current expenses. A request was made that the school create a high school account for fundraising specific to this task.
- Nicole Ortloff- Wensel's father is a school consultant who specializes in new school start-ups; he believes it is feasible to open a new school in the next 18 months and may be able to offer us some guidance. Nicole agreed to find out what kind of advice he could offer, as well as what fee he normally charges for helping a new school open.

The subcommittee decided on the following next steps:

- 1) Select a leader to convene future meetings, etc. Jane Murdock volunteered to assume this responsibility.
- 2) Identify subcommittees to do more detailed research/work on the issues identified above:
 - a) Fundraising (Jane Murdock, Monique Walker)
 - b) Facilities (Jean Paul Villere—nominated in his absence)
 - c) Curriculum (Carla DeJoie; Eleanor and Devon Devereaux)
 - d) Charter issues/possibility of charter start-up funds or low-interest loan
 - e) Market research
 - f) Business plan

Marketing and Development committee: no report; Scott is out sick.

Facilities committee: Caretaker cottage appears to be the most attractive option, and **we** see no reasons to expect a problem from RSD. Ideally we'll get ownership of the building. Sean's report covered. Master plan **is** due out in March to determine which properties will be used by RSD or which **other schools** will be torn down and which will be left vacant. Our understanding is that any school can submit a request to renovate a school and obtain a **50-year** lease. We should get some clarification in Feb. or March re this master plan and possibility of getting our hands on one of these buildings—whether or not this is feasible, and whether it is desirable.

Finance committee:

- Profit and Loss sheet: Between July and December we have a positive income of \$50,000; we were budgeted to be at -\$94,600, so we are \$144,600 over budget.
- Comparison to last year: \$400,000 more income this year; expenses \$585,000 higher, so we are -\$114,200. Big difference is hurricane-related money from last year that is not available this year.
- Grant worksheet: have applied for \$462,000; budgeted \$75,000; awarded \$95,000; received to date \$15,000
- Old business: have set a date for completion of draft policy and procedure manual for Dec. 27, 2007.
- Planning to set aside money for cottage renovations, including by using some of the money from the Jeff Davis property sale to act as seed money for leverage in applying for more grants. Committee strongly recommends doing fundraising to replace any Jeff Davis money so that we keep a facility seed money account which we can use to attract donations and avoid taking out new loans.

V New Business

Discussion of incident with neighborhood person who threatened some of our children recently. Rico commends Sean for handling the situation coolly. Protocols were in place and followed. Rico has spoken to the local precinct captain who was also pleased with how the situation was handled and indicated his willingness to work closely with the school.

VI Public Comment

Parent in the audience reiterates her appreciation for Karen's service and for Sean's handling of recent incident.

Next meeting scheduled January 16, 2008

Motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM