

International School of Louisiana  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
June 17, 2008

Call to order: 4:55 p.m.

Present:

Board members:

Karen Mayer Dwyer

Richard Cortizas

Grant Ligon

Dottie Nelson

Scott Aiges

Staff:

Sean Wilson

Melanie Tennyson

Pam Stewart

Minutes:

Adoption of previous meeting's minutes postponed until next meeting.

Vote to hold executive session at conclusion of present meeting. No objection.

Executive Reports

President

Review vision statement notes from board retreat.

Reading of sections from "Charter Schools Trustees Guide," by Marci Cornel-Feist,  
Building Excellent Schools

Discussion of roles: Management vs. Governance

Naming of Board Committees:

Discussion of which of the three committees specified in the current bylaws should remain: Facilities, Finance, Governance.

Facilities:

Sean:

Current building is adequate 2008-2010. After three years there are questions of whether it will be adequate. Facilities committee will be needed for possible replication (additional K-8 sites) and/or high school. "If we're looking to grow, we have to look at how that growth can occur."

Grant: Ambivalent on need for facilities committee.

Dottie: Have a committee to look at post-2010 needs?

Scott: Do we need the committee for policy (board)? Or is it for implementation (administration)?

Karen: Proposes a facilities committee to begin work in January.

Vote:

Facilities committee to remain dormant until January meeting, at which a chair will be assigned. No objection.

Finance:

Committee to oversee financial policy, not day-to-day budgeting. Karen says school budget includes funds for outside CPA to take over duties Karen did as volunteer when school couldn't afford one.

Karen advocates keeping Finance committee. Grant volunteers to chair.

Role of committee: Policy setting. Audit at end of year will show need for policies to be set (example: prevent fraud or "whistle-blower" policy). Examine unusual budget fluctuations. Budget oversight.

Vote:

Retain Finance committee and appoint Grant as chair. No objections.

Governance:

Committee on Trustees that adds board members and oversees development of school and board policies. Develops policy manual. Develops new policies. Creates schedules of reporting by administration.

Dottie, Richard and Scott volunteer to serve. Grant (who has been current chair) also agrees to serve, although Karen advises him to reconsider because of the Finance chair workload.

Vote:

Retain Governance committee. No chair selected.

Ad Hoc Committees:

Academic Excellence:

Discussion of role of this committee. Most recently it has been home of discussion on future high school.

Is it to determine and oversee curriculum? Is it to determine academic policy? Is it to decide which academic results are to be reported by administration to the board?

Sean advocates for limiting role to deciding what reports are to be given (example: standardized test results). Sean indicated that open meetings are difficult to manage when numerous opinions are voiced on academic policy and direction. Sean gives example that board could rule to establish a particular curriculum that the administration feels is bad but is forced to implement.

Scott says the board has some jurisdiction over what kind of curriculum the school should have. Gives examples of foreign language immersion and International Baccalaureate.

Richard suggests limiting role of committee to “academic oversight,” similar to oversight role of finance committee. Scott suggests “academic policy.” Determining the mechanisms of implementation should be left to administration.

Karen suggests having an Academic Policy committee that should meet four times per year.

Grant suggests academic policy discussion could be handled through Governance committee.

Agreement (but no vote) to retain an Academic Oversight committee to recommend policy to the board as needed, and to determine which reports should be delivered to board and when. Karen agreed to Chair this committee.

Legislative:

Karen says role of committee has been to monitor bills in the Legislature that affect ISL. Maria Treffinger has served on this committee (Scott has, too).

Karen wants to retain and formalize the committee.

Scott says that unless we have the board volunteers with the necessary expertise and ability, monitoring the Legislature is an administrative function that should be contracted out as a professional service (ie, hire a law firm to advocate for ISL).

Sean says that various associations and institutions are active at important meetings and provide reports: East Bank Charter School Association; Scott Cowan Institute; New Schools for New Orleans. Proposed Committee members should have expertise and legal knowledge and that the function is too much for administration to handle.

Karen says that we do have committee members with the necessary expertise and ability to serve on Legislative committee.

No vote taken, but no objection to retaining Legislative committee with Karen as chair.

Development:

Scott (current chair): It's a function of every board member to help raise money for the school. We need a mechanism for board members to channel prospects and potential funding sources. Scott doesn't know if we need a formal committee.

Grant: We should set a fundraising goal.

Sean: There should be a goal. If there is a gap in the budget, that gap should be filled by board fundraising.

Karen: Suggests eliminating development as a committee, and that fundraising issues should be handled at the level of the entire board.

No vote taken, but no objection to eliminating Development committee.

Board Meeting Calendar:

Karen proposes new calendar of six meetings per year at strategic times, skipping holiday months (instead of current monthly meetings). Suggested time for meetings are 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. (instead of current 7 p.m. meetings).

Proposed calendar 2008-2009:

Wednesday, July 30

Wednesday, August 27

Wednesday, October 29

Wednesday, January 28

Wednesday, March 25

Saturday, May 23 (Retreat and Annual Meeting)

Vote:

Accept proposed calendar. No objection, but agreement that changes may be necessary.

Karen suggests that two or three meetings per year should be "training," with a facilitator to assist with issues such as long range plan and fundraising techniques.

Board Nominations and Resignations:

Marc Rosenblum resignation letter read.

Motion to accept: Dottie. Second: Grant. All in favor No objection.

Matthew Amoss nomination to the board.

Motion to accept: Karen. Second: Grant. All in favor, No objection.

Grant Ligon. Current board member, three-year term is up. (but no motion, second or vote).

New Board Nominations:

Resumes distributed of three potential new board members:

Andrew Yon  
Carolyn Barber-Pierre  
Adrian Coleman

Nomination of Board Officers:

Karen: finishing president term of Tonya Morrow, up for new term in May 2009.

Treasurer: Currently Karen. Vote at next meeting.

Secretary (to replace Marc Rosenblum). Vote to appoint Matt Amoss as secretary (no motion or second, but no objection).

Vice President (to replace Enrico Sterling). Karen nominates Dottie Nelson.

Motion: Scott. Second: Grant. All in Favor. No objection.

Committee Reports:

Academic Committee: Karen

Millage Renewal. Need to advocate to renew at July 19 public election. Cost of defeat would be \$1,000 per student, or \$500,000 annually. Cowan Institute is doing public advocacy.

Discussion of ISL high school options:

Moving forward with independent ISL high school

Some sort of collaboration with other language schools

RSD superintendent Paul Vallas' proposed International High School

Budget Committee: Sean

Changing presentation of budgets from profit & loss to format more in line with typical nonprofit presentation.

New elements:

Professional development for teachers

Athletic program

Technology instructor

Working toward five-year projection to 2013. Revenue projections assume increase in amount of student funding because of "replication" (ie, establishing additional K-8 sites).

Motion:

Accept proposed 2008-2009 budget to submit to BESE. No objection.

New Business:

None

Public Comment:

Melanie: Likes new budget format  
John Beaulieu: new board liaison for PTO.

Adjournment: 6:58 p.m.

Executive Session: called to order at 6:58 p.m.

Discussion of matter involving a student.

Executive session adjourned: 8:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Scott Aiges, June 22, 2008.