

ISLA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 10th, 2009, 6:30 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

ISLA School Building - 12007 Excelsior Blvd, Minnetonka, MN – Room #121

Mission: International Spanish Language Academy (ISLA), a K-6 Spanish immersion community, empowers the whole child by nurturing the development of personal growth, strong character, academic excellence, and global vision.

1. Called to Order – Meeting was called to order at : 6:30 pm

Board Members present: Molly Quinn, Kate Shamblo, Michael Valley, Melody Brombacher, Sonia Miller-VanOrt, Mark Mathison, Karen Terhaar ISLA Director, Karen Utt (PTO Representative)

Board Members not present: Steve Semler, Erik Swenson, Kerry Krawczyk-LeMieux, Samantha Baksic, Diane Schimelpfenig (Hopkins School District)

Mark Mathison read Mission Statement

2. Acceptance of January 13th minutes --- Acceptance of February 10th agenda

MOTION: Motion to accept January 13th minutes: Kate Shamblo, Second: Sonia Miller-VanOrt. Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Motion to approve February 10th agenda: Michael Valley, Second: Kate Shamblo. Passed unanimously.

3. Public Input – none present

4. PTO Report – Karen Utt

- a. TA program – discussion to continue to build program and further develop aunt uncle portion. Info night will be March 6, Family Night #3. Family Night #2 was cancelled due to snow.
- b. Looking for furniture resources for class art which will be auctioned at the Spring Silent Auction.
- c. Argentine Dance after-school class currently running.
- d. Macaroni Grill providing dinner for teachers next Tuesday for conferences.
- e. PTO voted to provide free childcare for Strategic Planning Sessions. There will be a sign up on web, preferably sign up one day in advance to assure adequate supervision.
- f. Volunteers needing background check – not required at this time. Staff should be present with students when a volunteer is involved.
- g. Teacher majority rule regarding Board of Directors membership: Discussion regarding teacher majority waiver. Looking for parents to participate on the nominating committee.

Board member Samantha Baksic arrived at 7:03 due to conferences.

- h. Regarding nominating committee for open Board of Director's position for the next year beginning July 1, 2009, discussed relationship between PTO and Board. According to the Board bylaws there is

a PTO liaison position required. Nominating committee requires a non-Board PTO member which is important for recruiting Board candidates.

5. Director's Report – given by Karen Terhaar

- a.** Enrollment application update: 70 Kinder applications currently received therefore a lottery will take place on Tuesday, February 17. Of the 70 applications, 11 are siblings.
- b.** Early entrance policy has been that families would get approval for such through their home district. Question is whether or not home district would complete the evaluation process. We do not have the resources for this type of evaluation on our own nor are we required to allow students early admittance. To this point, parents who have enquired have been directed to go through their own district. Karen T is working on a draft of such a policy and will present it at the next Board meeting.
- c.** General Update: Has been very busy. The PTO and Board chair met with Karen. They discussed communication between the 3 groups, brainstormed ideas such as effective use of scheduling, for instance, after Strategic Planning Committee meetings to be sure that all those affected will be aware of the action plans. One example is the band issue and how to ensure that details have been communicated to all factions who may be affected both in the present and the future. Need to develop procedures for activities such as band since we will most likely continue to add other activities over the years as well.
- d.** Full day kinder fee was \$3,400 last year. Hopkins has not increased the fee for next year. We need to determine 2009-2010 fee – thus far we have simply stated to families that last year's fee was \$3,400.

MOTION: Karen moved that we keep our Full day Kinder fee at \$3, 400 for 2009-2010. Michael seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

ACTION ITEM Review the Full Day fee as part of the finance committee.

- e.** Hiring native speakers of Spanish as staff members also involves immigration and visas. There is someone with expertise who is willing to do pro-bono work regarding this issue. Mark will not vote on this issue when Karen requests approval. There will be no charge for the legal services. Charter school statute notes that directors (Board of director members) may not charge a fee.

MOTION: Kate moved that we authorize Karen to sign the letter of engagement with Gray Plant Mooty. Michael seconded. Mark recused himself. Board is very appreciative of the fact that Gray Plant Moody is willing to take on this pro-bono work on behalf of ISLA. Motion passed.

6. New Business:

At the last Governance committee meeting Melody noted that it would be effective to establish a treasurer-elect position, much like the chair-elect position, in which someone would be in training for the year previous to taking on the duties of finance. A 30 day notice in advance of the next meeting must be given of the proposed bylaw amendment. It will be noted that there will be a motion to amend the bylaws with respect to this issue in the same location as notice of the next Board meeting is posted. This person does not technically need to be a Board of Director member.

Meeting Break 8:02 Meeting reconvened at 8:07

7. Committee Reports –

a. Strategic Planning – Sonia

Had first meeting. Topic was relationship with the sponsor. Recommendation of committee was to expand relationship with the sponsor.

MOTION: Sonia moved that Board authorize Strategic Planning Committee to expand the scope this year to include the issue of the relationship with the district separate and distinct from relationship with the sponsor. Samantha seconded.

Legislative changes may make it more challenging to serve as a sponsor. Our sponsorship is up this June 30 but they must give us a 90 day notice in order to have time to find another sponsor. If we were not able to find another sponsor then the sponsorship would continue for an additional year. Motion carried. Activities of Task Force were determined.

Next meeting will be this Thursday and will be meeting with the Finance committee.

b. Personnel – Molly

School should anticipate that there is a cost to the school when an applicant requires and H-1b visa and that fee will not be paid by the candidate. It is the school who must apply for the H-1b Visa. These visas are prepared and submitted prior to April 1st when they are awarded. The cost is incurred regardless of whether or not the visa is granted.

Board member Erik Swensen arrived at 8:23 pm due to conferences.

Karen T has observed and worked with this particular candidate who would require an H-1b visa. He has gotten strong recommendations and is a native speaker of Spanish. He has a TSOL license, not elementary, at this time but would work towards those requirements. He has done much of the preliminary work towards gathering the documents needed and needs to complete some coursework to translate his current license (not Minnesota) into a current Minnesota license. The Board would like to see a condition that notes that he has submitted paperwork by a set date. Teachers with provisional licenses, those given when a teacher is working towards completing licensure in a specific area, are considered appropriately licensed. Once they have completed the necessary requirements within the given amount of time to earn the license for the particular area of teaching, the teachers are then considered “highly qualified”.

MOTION: Sonia moved that the Board authorize the executive director to proceed with the Visa and immigration filing needed to pursue the teacher candidate. Kate seconded. Amendment passed.

MOTION: Michael moved that we add to the motion “if it is determined that the likelihood of this applicant receiving an H-1 b visa is more than 50%.” Mark seconded. We are agreeing that we are basing it on last year’s H-1b lottery numbers. Sonia voted against the amendment. Amendment passed. Motion carried.

ACTION ITEM Molly will send Emily an email inviting people with Human Resource experience or interest to join the personnel committee.

Next personnel meeting: To be determined since there is a conflict with the 4th Tuesday of this month. Contact Molly Quinn if interested in serving on the Personnel committee.

c. Facility – Michael

MOTION: Michael moved that Kate take over as chair of facility committee. Mark seconded. Motion passed.

Next year’s classrooms – one room is windowless. Could this be a code issue?

ACTION ITEM: Kate will investigate the windowless issue and whether or not it is code related.

MOTION: Michael moved that the Board authorize Facility Committee to accept rooms 34 and 35 as classroom space for next year if it meets code. Mark seconded. If it comes down to code, can/will the church be able to give us space with a window? Deadline for getting lease signed? Last year lease was signed in June. This year we would like to finalize earlier.

Michael moved that we vote to close the discussion on the motion and then call for a vote on the motion. Motion to close the discussion passed by a 2/3 majority vote. Outcome regarding vote on initial motion: Michael, Kate, Mark, Molly, Karen T voted in favor of the motion. Erik, Samantha, Sonia and Melody voted against.

d. Communications –

Karen has been distributing flyers and working on submitting a photo for local publications.

Karen is also working on signage outside.

e. Governance - Sonia

- a.** Sonia reported that they briefly met and will be meeting again on Feb 28. They will be discussing the budget.
- b.** There will be packets available for all Board members addressing current policies and any needed policies that we do not currently have in place.
- c.** Discussion regarding waiver issue on teacher majority: According to MDE we would have to establish good cause to request a waiver. We must demonstrate how the waiver would benefit the school. Information collected from staff and community would then be brought back to the Board who would then determine whether or not we would go forward with the waiver. The aim would be that the Board membership would be affected by the waiver only if needed. Regarding the teacher majority requirement for Board seats, what is the likelihood that state would revise that legislation? MACS is supporting that change. The waiver would be effective for the next year and for the term of the charter.
- d.** Currently this committee is working on putting together a grievance policy, by staff or families, and drafting a policy to that affect.
- e.** Sponsor task force was not part of that meeting and will be addressed in Other Business.
- f.** Spread the word that ISLA is now actively seeking new Board members for those Board of Director seats which are/will be open. There will be 4 seats available beginning July 1. According to the teacher majority rule, 2 of the 4 openings need to be teachers for a total of 4 teacher positions. There are currently 2 teachers on the Board whose seats are not up for re-election at this time.

8. Other Business:

Samantha reported that staff discussed waiver issue at Feb 4 staff meeting. The responsibilities of Board members were outlined. Teachers demonstrated interest in participating on the Board. One of the interview questions directly addresses the teacher majority which puts the expectation up front and encourages teachers to take on that role at some point.

Possible reservations about the teacher majority relates to the logistics of decision making and voting on issues that could be conflict of interest but also the balance of responsibilities throughout the ISLA community. A variety of skills and expertise are crucial to the success of the Board and continuing to provide support throughout the committees and specific needs whether a Board member or otherwise is vital. The time responsibility is great therefore the concern would be that teachers not get burnt out as a

result of serving on the Board and teaching as well. A strong teacher presence is a definite strength and a majority of teachers would bring a strong representation of teachers.

Strongly encourage anyone interested to contact the nomination committee. It was commented that continuing to recruit volunteers and committee members throughout will make a tremendous impact on the work load and effectiveness of the Board. Also noted that possibly a majority of teachers could indicate to the ISLA community that while teachers are serving on Board there are many more opportunities for supporting the success of ISLA through volunteering and committee participation.

Teacher vote regarding waiver – would it change if teachers heard the extent of the time commitment? Should we go ahead with the waiver if teachers are not in favor of the waiver?

Task Force – not discussed.

Saturday, February 28: Special Work Session of the Board. The training portion – open up to teachers.

9. Set next meeting time – Monthly Board of Directors Meeting: **Tuesday, March 10, 2009** – 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Adjourn – Motion to adjourn at **10:00 pm**: **Mark Mathison**. **Second: Michael Valley**. **Motion passed**.