

Twin Cities International Elementary School

Minutes of the School Board Meeting held on Saturday, April 16, 2011, at 10:42 am, at the International Education Center, 277 12th Avenue North, Room 120, Minneapolis, MN, 55401.

Board Members Present: Mr. Abdikarim Mohamed, Ms. Kristin Kjolsing, Mr. Abdirashid Warsame, Ms. Jessica Wroblewski, Ms. Christena Pulver, Mr. Abdisamad Ibrahim, Mr. Osman Mohamed and Ms. Wesam Shaker.

Absent: Mr. Ibrahim Aden

Ex-Officio Members Present: Dr. Randal Eckart, Director of Twin Cities International Elementary School. Dr. Jim Gross, Authorizer Representative of Century College.

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Authorizer Representative, Mr. Tom Black. Mohamed Egeh, Business Manager for Twin Cities International Elementary School.

Also Present: Board Clerk Ms. Bethany Forsberg, Mr. Ali Muse, Mr. Abdullah, Dorothy Sauser-Monnig and Gary Brown.

1.0 Open Meeting

Chair opened the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Chair acknowledged those present and thanked them for attending the meeting.

2.0 Approve Agenda

Time was given to review the agenda for the meeting.

Two corrections were noted.

Ms. Christena Pulver made a motion to approve the agenda with the corrections as noted.

Mr. Abdisamad seconded.

Motion Carried.

3.0 Minutes from the previous regular board meeting held on March 12, 2011 and the special board meeting held on March 18, 2011

Time was given to review the minutes from the previous regular board meeting held on March 12, 2011.

Four corrections were noted.

Ms. Christena Pulver made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting with the corrections as noted.

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing seconded.

Motion carried.

Time was given to review the minutes from the previous special board meeting held on March 18, 2011.

One correction was noted.

Ms. Jessica Wroblewski made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting with the correction as noted.

Mr. Abdisamad seconded.

Motion carried.

4.0 Treasurer's Report (10 min).

a. March 2011

This agenda item was tabled due to no representative being present from the business office. The board will be updated with the treasurer's report at the next meeting held in May 2011.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Charter School Authorizer Remark's

Dr. Jim Gross thanked the board for having him present at today's meeting.

Dr. Jim Gross noted:

Century College is currently serving a record number of students.

The transition of presidents will occur this summer and he is looking forward to welcoming Ron Anderson, who is the current vice president of academics, as the new president of Century College.

The spring open house was a successful event welcoming many prospective students including 35 from Ubah Medical Academy.

Century College is currently facing a 2 million dollar decrease in their budget for the upcoming 2011-2012 school year due to state allocations.

Century College is pleased to be the first school in Minnesota that is a part of the program called Achieving the Dream which helps improve student achievement at the collegiate level.

Dr. Jim Gross is attune to the change occurring in the authorizer status at TIES and is prepared to assist the school in any ways he can. He congratulated the people involved in obtaining a new authorizer as it has required a lot of hard work and dedication.

The Chair thanked Dr. Jim Gross for his continuous support.

5.2 Director's Report

Dr. Eckart reported:

The MCA tests for 3rd and 4th graders will take place on April 19th and 20th for reading and April 27th and 28th for math. These tests are of high importance as AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) status is determined from student scores. In addition to the MCA tests, the No Child Left Behind Act requires that schools have other assessment processes in effect to measure student progress. In order to meet this requirement, TIES uses the NWEA tests in kindergarten through 4th grade in both math and reading which are taken three times per year.

Currently, TIES has a highly successful kindergarten class with roughly 22 students reading at grade level and roughly 87 students reading above grade level. These students engage in daily writing activities such as journaling which was previously considered as more of a first grade level skill.

Dr. Eckart remarked that he is very proud of the success and achievement shown by the students at TIES.

On Monday, April 18th, Concordia College will be coming to visit TIES to begin working on the joint application that will be sent to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for approval.

The application process that began with St. Thomas has ended as the college decided to go in a different direction once their goals were finalized with regard to the new authorizership process. St. Thomas stressed that this is not due to TIES' academics or financial statuses which are in good standing.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Update Board Goals

Ms. Christena Pulver noted that changes have been made to the current board goals with regard to updating the mandated policies for a 1st, 2nd and 3rd reading.

6.2 Update an Authorizer Search Status

Dr. Eckart noted that from a legal perspective, TIES is no longer searching for an authorizer. Presently, TIES is working in conjunction with Concordia College to combine the two organizations and to create a joint application to send to MDE. MDE will have until June 30th, 2011 to make a final decision approving or rejecting the new authorizer and school partnership.

6.3 Annual Meeting

The Chair noted that forms have been sent to parents and staff announcing the four vacant seats on the board. There are 3 teacher members up for reelection and 1

community member. The board chair and secretary will meet during the next week to discuss nominations for the upcoming 2011-2012 school year. The board will follow all elections procedures that are currently in place.

6.4 Policy Committee

Ms. Jessica Wroblewski reported that there are 10 policies up for review today.

These include:

- 402 DISABILITY NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY (1st reading)
- 522 STUDENT SEX NONDISCRIMINATION (1st reading)
- 616 SCHOOL DISTRICT SYSTEM ACCOUNTABILITY (1st reading)
- 418-Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School (2nd reading)
- 419-Tobacco-Free Environment (2nd reading)
- 501-School Weapons Policy (2nd reading)
- 906-Community Notification of Predatory Offenders (Final reading)
- 505-Distribution of Nonschool-Sponsored materials on School Premises by Students and Employees (Final reading)
- 205-Open Meetings and Closed Meetings (Final reading)
- 416-Drug and Alcohol Testing (Final reading)

Ms. Wroblewski stated that policies 402, 522 and 616 are the model policies so no revisions have been made to them.

Ms. Wroblewski noted that policies 418, 419 and 501 are in their 2nd reading so anything highlighted red will be omitted and anything highlighted yellow will be added.

The changes that have been made to policies 418, 419 and 501 are relatively the same with regard to the word district being changed to school and the word principal being changed to director. The collective bargaining agreement in policy 501 was omitted because it does not apply to TIES.

Mr. Abdirashid made a motion to accept policies 402, 522 and 616 as 2nd readings and policies 418, 419 and 501 as 3rd readings for the meeting held in May 2011.

Ms. Christena Pulver seconded.

Motion carried.

Ms. Wroblewski stated that no additional changes have been made to policies 906, 505, 205 and 416 from the last meeting held in March 2011.

Mr. Osman Mohamed made a motion to adopt policies 906, 505, 205 and 416.

Mr. Abdisamad seconded.

Motion carried.

Ms. Wroblewski stated that policy 505 must be available for viewing by all employees so it will be posted in the staff lounge on Monday, April 18th, 2011.

6.5 Teacher/Board member resignation

The Chair noted that he received a letter of resignation from Kristin Kjolsing who will be moving out of state. The Chair remarked that Ms. Kjolsing is an asset to the board as a member on both the finance committee and the policy committee. He noted that her presence will be missed and he wished her the best in the future.

There have been two other resignations made by teachers who will also be moving out of state.

Dr. Eckart noted that teachers have been recruited from the job fair and so far there have been over 80 applicants. All interviews will include the administrative team, 1 teacher and 1 board member.

6.6 2010-2011 Proposal to allocate the fund balance surplus: Total proposal=approximately \$230,000 given by school director and financial committee.

Dr. Eckart noted:

The finance committee put together a plan to allocate the fund balance surplus. Mohamed Egeh had discussed with the financial committee that the fund balance is approaching 34-36%. He recommended spending some of the fund balance to reach 31% in order to sustain the holdback amount by the state which is 30%. He explained to the finance committee that the state may withhold money from schools that have an abundant surplus. He recommended utilizing the extra money in the fund balance and purchase/spend \$300,000 prior to June 30th, 2011.

At this time, many other schools in the state are scrambling to borrow money from financial institutions so TIES is very fortunate to be in its current position.

The proposal brought to the board today was prepared by the finance committee and it discusses allocating the \$230,000 as follows:

- \$10,000 -book bags to be used during the summer 2010-2011 summer program.
- \$40,000 -upgrade the security cameras and increase storage space
- \$30,000 -fencing around the playground
- \$10,000 -place new sod and dirt to help with formation of soccer field
- \$25-30,000- replace carpet in classrooms
- \$87,000- one time stipend for time already worked during the 2010-2011 school year.
- \$30,000- 3% and 2% compensation on base salaries for all staff due to the extended school year. This will include April-June of the 2010-2011 school year and continue into next year.

The two items that deal with teacher compensation are retroactive for time already worked.

Current legislature has the intent to accomplish a wages freeze in Minnesota which would stop or discontinue all raises or compensation in any form. This would mean that the salary stipend and compensation may not be options for TIES in the near future.

Mr. Osman noted that if we have excess money in the fund balance, he would like to see it spent on Somali instruction during the school day. He proposed that the instruction would last about one hour and would focus on reading and writing. He thinks this instruction is important to students in order to retain their cultural heritage and increase their cultural awareness. Mr. Osman also noted that this type of instruction is already occurring at the middle school level and he would like to see it extend to the elementary level.

Dr. Eckart stated that a similar proposal has already been sent to the finance committee and they are currently working on this recommendation. Financially our school is able to create a program that would allow for Somali instruction. However, the challenges lie with the amount of time and space TIES has which are limited.

Mr. Abdirashid noted that it is challenging to make decisions regarding this proposal since we rely on student enrollment to meet our financial obligations and if it drops, it could change our fund balance and we may need to use our current surplus. He continued by saying that he is in full support of staff getting more money and improving our building conditions. However, he is concerned because times change and if the state decides to holdback more money next year or if student enrollment drops, we will need to have this fund balance as a reserve. He noted that it took TIES 10 years to build this fund balance and we may want to wait to spend any surplus money we have accrued.

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing stated that TIES' surplus is between 34-35% and she agreed that the school does want to continue a conservative fund balance as TIES has traditionally done. She noted that TIES bases its financial projections on an enrollment of 570 students and the school has always had more. As a part of the financial committee, she is trying to work within the time frames of the state legislature and potential restricting factors.

Mr. Abdullah noted that Mr. Mohamed Egeh is an experienced accountant but he has no knowledge of our state potentially holding back any surplus money from our fund balance. He feels TIES should refrain from spending the money at this present time.

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing remarked that it is difficult to tell teachers that they need to continue to work year after year without any additional compensation.

Mr. Abdirashid noted that we have more students than projected which has led to this current surplus. However, if these students choose to leave, we will need to keep this money for insurance. He restated that if the state increases its holdback from 30% to an even higher amount, we will need to use the surplus money we have accrued.

The Chair stated that we could agree to accept parts of the proposal instead of it in its entirety.

Mr. Osman remarked that in order for our school to retain qualified and successful teachers, we need to compensate them.

Dr. Gross noted that the board could reject the current proposal but propose it in smaller pieces.

Mr. Ali stated that TIES' student population could be changing for the upcoming 2011-2012 school year as some families will be moving to Green Bay, WI. Because of this, it is important to make sure that we have insurance money in case our student enrollment drops.

Mr. Abdisamad noted that the main purpose for the board is to safeguard the school. The way TIES is concerned with education is the same way it needs to be concerned with finances. There is nothing wrong with being prepared. He agreed with giving teachers a salary increase, however, he advised the board not to rush to decisions. He stated that Mr. Mohamed Egeh would be an important person to talk to about these issues. Since it is the end of the school year, it is difficult to make these types of decisions. He commented that it is important for the board to be patient and try to get more information before making a decision.

The Chair thanked the board members for their remarks.

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing stated that she has been the treasurer for the last four years and she agrees with the comments made by the other board members. However, some of these items may need to be voted on today since they are time sensitive.

Mr. Abdirashid remarked that it is the board's job to ask hard questions and also to make decisions. He feels teachers should be compensated but he is concerned about the potential impact that losing this money could have on TIES.

Dr. Gross stated that from his experience, it is unusual to ask 30-60 employees to work longer hours without compensation. The fact that the results have been so positive at TIES is due to the efforts made by the instructors. The teachers have stepped up and worked an extended school day and year without added compensation. He believes that it is important to have equity with regard to hours worked and pay if the board is in a position to compensate teachers for this time. He noted that this is not about spending but investing.

Mr. Abdullah remarked that this is not a raise but a compensation for time already worked. He stated that other institutions are struggling and without the hard work of our teachers, we would not be where we are today. However, he does not see the rush in making a decision.

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing stated that the only time sensitive items are compensating teachers for the extended school day and lengthened school year.

Mr. Abdirashid made a motion to make the 3% and 2% salary stipend for the .5 hour increase in the school day and the 3% and 2% base salary compensation for the lengthened school year action items today.

Ms. Jessica Wroblewski seconded.

Motion carried.

7.0 Action Items

Ms. Jessica Wroblewski make a motion to accept the onetime 3% and 2% salary stipend for the 2010-2011 school year for the .5 hour increase in the school day and the 3% and 2% base salary compensation for the lengthened school year.

Ms. Christena Pulver seconded.

Motion carried.

10.0 Old Business

No old business at this time.

11.0 Adjournment

Ms. Kristin Kjolsing made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:52 p.m.

Ms. Christena Pulver seconded.

Motion carried.