

Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes
Yinghua Academy Library, 1616 Buchanan Street NE, Minneapolis
Monday, October 4, 6:00 PM
final

Board Members in Attendance

Maryann Choy (Secretary), Scott Jax, Taoyuan Li, Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller, Keri Norell, Doug Parish (Treasurer), Abigail Pribbenow (Chair), Jen Shadowens, Kristin Swenson

Board Members Not in Attendance

Director in Attendance

Betsy Lueth

YACA Liason

Ruth Straub

Public in Attendance

Several members of the public attended the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Pribbenow called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

Ms. Pribbenow noted that the public comment time has been moved to the end of the meeting.

The MOTION by Mr. Jax to approve the proposed agenda was seconded and passed.

III. AUDIT REPORT

Matt Mayer of Kern, Dewenter, Viere, Ltd. (KDV) presented Yinghua Academy's Financial Statements Audit for the fiscal year end of June 30, 2010. KDV has completed Yinghua Academy's financial audits for the past three years. In addition to the usual audit, an additional compliance audit was required because Yinghua received grants totaling more than \$500,000. Yinghua received an unqualified audit on all three assessments, the best report possible.

Yinghua ended the fiscal year with an 11% fund balance, or \$303,426, in the General Fund which is normal for charter schools. A charter school average fund balance is between 10-20%.

IV. BOARD APPROVALS

A. Minutes from Regular Meeting of the School Board, September 9, 2010

The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to approve the September 9, 2010 minutes with corrections, was seconded and passed.

B. Offsite Study Request

The MOTION by Dr. Li to approve the student leave of absence, as described in the Offsite Study in China document was seconded and passed.

C. Amendment to Facebook Guidelines

The MOTION by Mr. Jax to ammend Yinghua Academy's Facebook Page Guidelines as stated in the 9/29/10 draft was seconded and passed.

D. News/Events Communication Guidelines

Ms. Shadowens deferred review of news/events guidelines until the draft is complete.

E. Part Time Retention

Ms. Lueth proposed a change to the retention policy to include parttime positions. There are a number of parttime staff and teaching staff that have been employed for more than three years. The Board questioned the reasoning for a 50% rate for an employee averaging 30 hours per week. Why not prorate the retention bonus? Ms. Lueth will re-evaluate who qualifies, propose amounts and calculate the budget impact. This agenda item will be moved to the December 6th Board meeting, which is after the school budget is revised late November.

F. Substitute Pay

Ms. Lueth proposed a Substitute pay rate for short term and long term substitutes. A long term substitute is defined as 15 consecutive days or more. In 2010, St. Paul school district pays \$110 for short term substitutes and \$125 for long term substitutes.

The MOTION by Mr. Jax to approve the substitute pay rates as defined in the October 4, 2010, draft was seconded and passed.

V. BOARD TRAINING FOLLOW-UP

School Board members participated in board governance training in June with several presenters including attorney Amy Mace of Ratwick, Roszak, and Maloney, P.A. Ms. Mace said it is common for boards to request additional training when specific issues arise.

- A. Open meeting law (OML) states one copy of materials must be made available to the public for related meeting agenda items.
- B. Discussion between majority of the Board is presumed public data unless it is non-public data. eg. personnel data, educational / student data, attorney-client data. This includes emails.
- C. When emailing all Board members, Ms. Mace suggests no discussion (do not "reply all"). Email is public data. When emailing, should specifically state how the discussion relates to a specific agenda item so that one can request information, retroactively. If non-public data is included, it must be redacted or sent in a separate email of private data.
- D. Notices for Special Meetings must be posted 3 days in advance stating the date, time, place and purpose. Posting should be placed on the school's main bulletin board and meeting room door. Regular meetings do not need to be posted unless changes are made. Agendas do not have to be posted. When an individual requests to be notified of special meetings, this request has to be met.
- E. Committees with no decision-making authority and without a quorum of the Board, are not required to follow OML or post meeting notices. However, the Board should check with sponsor to see what they require. Yinghua's Bylaws say Committees will be "open". It does not matter what it is called, Committee or Team.
- F. The law allows the Personnel Team to conduct closed meetings, if the discussion is of private data. OML states a meeting can be closed for two reasons: 1) considering preliminary allegations of an employee and 2) performance evaluation. Cannot generalize and make all Personnel Team meetings closed. OML does not *require* one to notify the individual being discussed. However, the individual has the right to request an open meeting, and thus Ms. Mace advises the Board to notify the employee. All closed meetings, require the Board to state who is being evaluated and report a summary at the next open meeting.

- G. Bylaws say who may sit on a Board committee. Board determines this. There are no State requirements.
- H. Public comments, a common question, is not required by law. Ms. Mace reminded the Board that it is a public body and *should* allow for public comments. Guidelines are needed to define when, manner/etiquette, time limit for speaker(s). Comments should be addressed to the Chair. Personal attacks will be called out of order. Need to limit time so that the Board can accomplish the business of the school. Ms. Mace will provide sample policy or standards for public comment.
- I. It is acceptable for the Chair to call on a non-Board member to speak if such person is most knowledgeable.
- J. Hold Special meetings for any purpose or purposes. Special meetings are opened to the public. There is no public comment during a Special meeting, as the reason is, solely for a specific purpose.
- K. Ms. Mace is not aware of a model for complaints or grievance processes for charter schools. Charter school employees should follow proper internal channels and if not successful, the issue should go to the Board.
- L. Cannot take any formal action in a closed meeting. Action has to be in an opened meeting. Need to summarize in next open meeting.
- M. Should negotiate facilities in a closed meeting, as it is recognized that negotiations are better managed in small groups. The facilities committee is not a decision-making body.
- N. After reviewing Yinghua Board bylaws, Ms. Mace suggested the Board to review as the Bylaws state the need to notify Board members of Board meetings 5 days in advance.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REORT

- A. Ms. Lueth invited the Board to participate in the staff's butterfly hopes and dreams activity where each staff member wrote their dream on a paper butterfly. These will be posted in the staff resource area.
- B. Ms. Lueth called on Mr. Schlueter to report on the 9/7 recess injury, see below.
- C. The Board expressed appreciation for Karen Calcaterra's grant summary, an excellent and comprehensive report. It is useful to see which proposals are pending and which were not funded. Ms. Moeller asked if this summary could be updated and reported quarterly. Ms. Calcaterra was cautious that we are in a very active grant writing period and that future updates might not include as much activity. Ms. Lueth reported that Yinghua did not receive the Federal School counseling grant. Ms. Calcaterra also clarified that the Groves Academy collaboration is not truly a grant although, \$19K will be given to Yinghua to support the Groves Academy staff.
- D. Given our charter school's dependence on enrollment, Ms. Shadowns asked for better reporting of enrollment including percentage changes and a more formalized way of tracking attrition. Mr. Schlueter is tracking individual attrition by interviewing the families. Ms. Lueth will provide enrollment data over time at the next Board meeting.

Safety, Carl Schlueter

- E. Prior to this meeting, the Board Chair sent Mr. Schlueter and Ms. Lueth a list of questions about the recent recess injury and how it was handled.
- F. Mr. Schlueter referred to the safety documents included in the Director's report.
- G. He reported that policy changes have not yet been approved by the Executive Director. These changes are expected to be complete by October 21. They include:
 1. add to staff handbook instructions for youth head injury prevention and recommended response,
 2. revise the guidelines for contacting parents which are listed in the family handbook, and
 3. revise the incident report form to include intent, where and who was involved as well as "uninjured but emotionally affected"
- H. Immediate changes already in place include how the swings are used and specifics on pushing the swings.

- I. The office staff met to review how parents are notified of an incident, when to expect the parent and preparing and welcoming the parent especially during recess and lunch and assuring the student is attended to.
- J. Critical staff for this type of incident are the RN, SFC Director, Behavior Specialist and office staff. Critical staff need additional training on head injury protocol. Other suggestions include: Expanding the health aide hours, providing a student safety session at a YACA meeting, inviting MDE to review our incident reporting procedure.
- K. Mr. Schlueter reported that this particular injury was “progressive” as symptoms began to appear and worsen over time.
- L. Volunteers were re-oriented the day after the incident to notify the Behavior Specialist immediately if a similar incident should occur. The health aide, administrative assistant and administrative directors have more training in first aide.
- M. Ms. Shadowens asked to increase supervision with climbing equipment as well, since these also have a high accident rate. Ms. Shadowens also asked the school administration to daily designate who is in charge in the office and who is the trained administrator on duty. These daily assignments should be made known at all times. Ms. Swenson stated that Children’s Hospital has a baseline test for head injury that is taken on a computer to establish a child’s baseline, for a small fee. The data resides both with the individual and Children’s Hospital for future reference.

VII. SCHOOL BOARD REPORTS

A. Chair

1. Regular Meetings of the School Board for January - July 2011

The Board confirmed January 10, 2011, as the first Board meeting of the new year. For the next dates, Ms. Pribbenow will work with Mr. Jax who indicated conflicts with the proposed 3-week schedule. Ms. Pribbenow will report back at the next Board meeting.

2. Board Teams

- a. Ms. Pribbenow defined the Board teams on the October 1, 2010, document. Website Development was an *ad hoc* project and is complete. Website maintenance will fall under Marketing. The Academic Team had changes to its membership.
- b. Ms. Pribbenow will work with the Volunteer Coordinator to see if the VC can assume the coordination of the Hospitality effort.

3. Filling Board Member Seat

- a. Ms. Pribbenow. Dr. Lien and Mr. Jax talked with Professor Pangyen (Ben) Wang to see if he would be interested in filling the open Board seat as a community member. Professor Wang is originally from Taiwan and teaches math at Metro State University. He resides in Minneapolis and has a child attending Nova. He is attending tonight’s meeting. Other possible candidates, as they arise, will be invited to attend a board meeting.
- b. Our bylaws say an open seat can be filled by a new Board-designated member until the next scheduled election in which this new member would need to stand for general election.

4. 501 c 3 for Fundraising Purposes

Ms. Pribbenow and Tess DeGeest, YACA Chair, met with the Management Assistance for Nonprofits (MAP) to go over what is needed to start a 501 c 3 application for a foundation. The name “Yinghua Academy Foundation” will be used to file articles of incorporation. The purpose of the 501 c 3 is to raise funds for the school through a tax-exempt charitable organization. The foundation also will allow the school to expand programs such as publishing.

5. Liaison Roles

Ms. Pribbenow met with Ms. Straub to discuss guidelines for YACA and school Board liaisons. A proposal to give ex-officio status, allow committee participation and defines other responsibilities was documented for Board review. At a later date the Board will consider revisions to its bylaws to reflect the liaison roles.

B. Treasurer

1. September financial statements are not ready for review. There was a payroll timing issue for direct deposits because, with our retention bonuses, bank limits were exceeded and the file was incorrectly coded. The bank discovered the error the following day and re-processed the direct deposits. Staff were told that any fees incurred because of this delay would be covered by the school. No such reimbursements have been requested.
2. From the EFT report, Ms. Moeller asked if Yinghua gets reimbursed by the families who cause bank fees due to insufficient funds. Ms. Lueth said these charges are passed on to the respective families.

C. Teams

1. YACA. Ms. Straub reported that Chinook books were sent in student's backpack and ends October 15th. Double 9th Day celebration is Thursday October 14 with Kite Festival /Grandparents Day. The first YACA general membership meeting is October 19th with Tara Fortune, as speaker. Thanks to Mr. Schlueter for attending First Friday coffee. Having Administration present at the Friday coffees is productive. Art partnerships for K through 2nd grade started with MIA visits. The student directory is being updated.
2. Academic. Dr. Lien said the Academic team met today. Ms. Moeller will revise the team's mission statement. They discussed their roles and priorities. SEAC will discuss how they will report at the next SEAC meeting later this month.
3. Facilities. Mr. Jax reported that the two architect parents, Carl Gauley and Karen Lu, finalized the needs assessment and U+B architects is working with it now. Mr. Jax is working with Craig Kepler, the attorney who worked on the facility purchase agreement, on 5 of 6 different survey issues, most of which are minor. The property was bought "as is" from the City. At the end of the month, the Facilities team will define one or two scenario(s) to pursue further. Unanswered questions remain regarding the Parks and Recreation space.
4. Fundraising. Ms Swenson said the team moved the gala date to February 19th which is still within the continuing Chinese New Year celebration. The Red Envelope campaign, or direct donations, has been moved to the Fall to coincide with GiveMN.org. Ms. Swenson and Ms. Pribbenow are drafting a letter to kick-off the Red Envelope campaign.
5. Marketing and Web. Ms. Shadowens reported that the Website launch is scheduled for October 15th. The staff is working with new content pages. 15-20 items have been assigned. Ms. Calcaterra is editing most of the pages and Eric Johnson, parent and web content editor is also, helping. The website requires a lot of work. The initial launch will not include classroom pages or student pages; these will be added at a later date. Ms. Shadowens is concerned with the ongoing maintenance of the website. She agreed that the website is a Marketing function, but clearly stated, the on-going maintenance of Yinghua's website will not be the responsibility of the Marketing Team. Transition is needed to move website maintenance to internal staff. Next, Ms. Shadowens will meet with Ms. Lueth on the Middle School marketing needs. Ms. Shadowens met with a volunteer who has HR experience and is revising the communication audit approach by first drafting a communication plan and then validating the plan with a review. Coordination will continue to dovetail this work with the Organizational Effectiveness team's to minimize duplication of work.

6. Organizational Effectiveness. Ms. Choy revised the workload plan which is now being referred to as a process improvement workplan, to incorporate input from the school administration. Ms. Lueth is reviewing this document and will get back to Ms. Choy on how to proceed.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Strategic Planning Approach and Timeline

1. Ms. Choy drafted a strategic planning approach and timeline as a means to initiate discussion. The assumptions used were twofold: 1) an outside facilitator will be used at Special meetings and 2) strategic planning is an on-going process; a process that requires periodic review and possibly a subcommittee to manage.
2. Ms. Lueth supports the strategic planning effort and recognized how it fits with the 3-5 yr Facilities needs.
3. Ms. Shadowens questioned the timing of when the strategic planning is needed given the Board's overwhelming workload these past months. Most Board projects are already on an aggressive pace. Many of the projects can help contribute to the strategic planning, for example, the development of the middle school program, fundraising, the communication plan, process improvement effort and facilities.
4. Ms. Swenson suggested taking time to consult with facilitators / experts to get a realistic timeline, approach and cost for developing a normal strategic plan. It would help to have a longterm, updated budget available (that is usually done in March / April) to help guide our discussion. Ms. Swenson knows of two facilitators and Mr. Jax knows one from his workplace.
5. Ms. Pribbenow asked Board members to bring these options to the next Board meeting, October 25th.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Two members of the public commented.

X. ADJOURN

The MOTION by Mr. Jax to adjourn, at 8:40 PM was seconded and passed.

Minutes drafted by MaryAnn Choy, Board Secretary

Approved by vote of Board on: October 25, 2010