

**Regular Meeting of the Yinghua Academy School Board**  
Yinghua Academy Library, 1616 Buchanan Street NE, Minneapolis  
Monday, December 6, 2010, 6:00 PM  
final

**Board Members in Attendance**

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

**Board Members Not in Attendance**

Abigail Pribbenow (Chair), Dr. Luyi Lien (Acting Executive Director)

**YACA Liaison**

Ruth Straub

**Public in Attendance**

Members of the public attended the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr Parish, Treasurer, called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to approve the agenda with changes was seconded and passed.**

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

A comment was offered.

IV. BOARD APPROVALS

- A. Minutes From the Regular Board Meeting, November 11, 2010  
**The MOTION by Ms. Shadowens to approve the November 11, 2010 minutes with corrections, was seconded and passed.**
- B. Minutes From the Special Board Meeting, November 21, 2010  
**The MOTION by Mr. Jax to approve the November 21, 2010 minutes with corrections, was seconded and passed.**
- C. Retention Bonuses for Long Term Part Time Staff  
**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to approve retention bonus pay that was committed in writing without Board review and to have the Personnel Committee review this process for future bonus/salary commitments assuring Board approval before making a formal offer, was seconded and passed.**

Ms. Norell wanted to be sure that this review considers all new contracts before they are signed, particularly for the next round of teacher hiring in the Spring.

#### IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

##### A. Interim Executive Director Search

Ms. Swenson stated that the Search Committee is working with two finalists. One finalist is spending the day at the school for teacher interviews and observations. A special board meeting will be needed to approve the Search team's recommendation.

Ms. Moeller wanted to recognize Ms. Swenson, Committee Chair, and the Search Committee for their exemplary, professional and well-managed work. The Board expressed their appreciation for the entire team:

- Teachers: Fangwen Yeh, Hueling Chen, Shu Mei Lai, Keri Norell, Ruth Hanson
- YACA Board members: Coley Murphy, Serena Jones-White, Tess DeGeest
- School Board members: Kristin Swenson, Scott Jax, Abigail Pribbenow

Ms. Swenson especially noted sincere appreciation for the teachers who committed their time during the hectic demands of teacher-parent conferences.

The Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of starting the permanent Executive Director search before year end.

**The MOTION by Mr. Jax to have Ms. Moeller, Ms. Shadowens and Ms. Swenson write and post a brief ED job description by mid-December to initiate a national search in a timely fashion was, seconded and passed.**

##### B. Strategic planning

Ms. Choy was asked by Ms. Pribbenow to discuss the feasibility of having Karl Jentoft, VP of Charter School Development Corporation (the organization from which Yinghua leases its building) to facilitate a strategic planning session with the Board while he is in the Twin Cities, December 16-20. The Board discussed the timing and the need to first decide on topics for discussion and agree on a planning session approach. Mr. Parish asked the Board to bring three discussion topics to the Special Meeting or to submit to Ms. Pribbenow, the Board Chair before the next regular Board meeting in January. Ms. Choy will let Mr. Jentoft know the Board is not ready to conduct a planning session at this time. Ms. Swenson will, also, follow up with a recommended approach from another possible facilitator.

##### C. Election of a New Board Member

Dr. Pangyen (Ben) Weng introduced himself. He is a professor of math at Metropolitan State University and is from a family of teachers. He is interested in the cultural aspects of immersion learning and would focus on what is good for our children and teachers. His child attends Nova Classical Academy, a charter school in St. Paul, also, authorized by Friends of Education. He would qualify as a

community member of the Board. Dr. Weng did not bring his biography tonight but will give a copy to Ms. Pribbenow for distribution.

**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to elect Dr. Ben Weng to the Board for the remaining duration of the school year after which, he will have to stand for general election was, seconded and passed.**

D. Board Officer Elections to be held on January 11, 2011 Regular Meeting

Mr. Parish reminded the Board that officer elections will be held at the next regular meeting on January 11, 2011. Each position, Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will serve for a one-year term, January - December, 2011. Mr. Parish asked current officers to let Ms. Pribbenow know your intentions of re-running by December 17th, to give Ms. Pribbenow time to recruit, if needed.

E. Bylaws

Revised Bylaws and attorney notes on Bylaws revisions were distributed to the Board for review. The Board was advised by our attorney that the attorney notes are confidential and subject to the attorney-client privilege; however, the marked up copy of proposed revisions is available for public review. Mr. Parish said majority of the changes are required to maintain compliance with the new Charter School law that was recently passed and is now being interpreted. Ms. Choy suggested that there are two issues that need further clarification and discussion by the Board.

1. Are Board committee meetings required to follow open meeting law (OML) as defined by our contract with Friends of Education? Ms. Choy is waiting on Ms. Topoluk's response to this contract question.
2. Limiting the number of Board Terms is at the Board's discretion. There does not currently seem to be a need to limit the number of terms a board member may serve for the following reasons:
  - a. Historically, nominating candidates have been minimum, at best.
  - b. Board members are elected. Every year one-third of the Board is up for re-election.
  - c. A Board member may be removed at any time by two-thirds majority of the Board, with or without cause.
  - d. The 1:1:1 governance model defined in our Bylaws requiring us to have at least one licensed teacher, one community member and one parent would be even more challenging if term limits were to be adopted as there is a small pool available of strictly defined "licensed" teachers and recruiting community members has been a challenge as well.

Mr. Parish suggested that the Board be prepared to walk through the Bylaws, page by page, at the next meeting, for approval.

V. ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT , *in absentia*

Dr. Lien forwarded a Director's report via email which the Board reviewed. Ms. Norell corrected the enrollment for 6th grade as 22 and for 7th grade as 9.

Ms. Shadowens questioned under Technology, if classroom page templates have been created and prepared for use by teachers pending Treefort's review. Ms. Shadowens recently met with Treefort and there was no mention of this work. It is reasonable to say classroom pages are in the process of being developed.

Mr. Jax questioned the priority and resource requirements (from teachers, staff and volunteers) for the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebration. Scaling back does not necessarily mean a bad performance. For parents, all performances are great!

Q-Comp was submitted on time. Ms. Norell said we have not heard back yet from MDE.

Given the amount of FLAP grant funding, Ms. Moeller asked if Dr. Lien and Karen Calcaterra could present a status report at the next Board meeting, January 11, 2011. The Board needs to be aware of where we are with our commitments and what is left to be done. Ms. Norell has the exact number of Chinese instruction time that is required and will share this with the Board.

Mr. Parish reported that SERVS reporting is contracted with BKDA to complete.

Ms. Norell said STARRS reporting was completed and submitted.

Open houses are going well. Mr. Schlueter revised the elementary presentation to an acceptable length of time. Ms. Norell thought the middle school (MS) Open House went well with six interested families. Middle School parents seem excited, enthusiastic, affirmative and committed. Ms. Shadowens was pleased that the free advertising brought in at least one interested Middle School family. Ms. Norell asked for the sign-up sheet of Board members for the Open Houses, as this is helpful for the day's assignments. Ms. Choy will follow up with Ms. Pribbenow to distribute the sign-up sheet.

The Board needs to revisit the Enrollment Policy, particularly as it addresses younger siblings of a middle schooler. Ms. Choy will forward the latest copy of the Enrollment policy to be discussed at the January meeting.

VI. SCHOOL BOARD REPORTS

A. Treasurer

1. The Electronic Funds Transfer Report was reviewed with all timely deposits and no unusual activity. Monthly financials are not ready and will be reviewed at the next meeting.
2. Mr. Parish estimates Yinghua will need about \$340K due to the State holdback. Mr. Parish and Ms. Pribbenow closed on a \$350K line of credit.

## B. Secretary

1. Ms. Choy reviewed a draft of Board intra-communication guidelines by type of communication. Ms. Choy will inquire with MACS, MSBA and other schools for their approach and report back to the Board.
2. Ms. Choy reviewed a draft of School Board Meeting Guidelines which was better received. It summarizes the Board's bylaws to two pages. It was suggested to introduce the document with, "Where more information is needed for clarification, the School Board Bylaws supersede these guidelines." Other modifications were noted. The Board will revisit this document after revising the Bylaws.

## C. Committees

1. YACA. Ms. Straub reported that Chinook sales raised more than \$4,000. The Nourishment team provided unique meals for the teacher conferences. Classroom coordinators are working with teachers for CNY program. YACA is working on its own strategic planning. Ms. Straub said she's received many comments of appreciation for Administration and Board attendance at the first Friday coffees. November's coffee lasted until 11:30am.
2. Marketing. Ms. Shadowens said the format for Marketing volunteers is not working. Despite her many requests for help, there is still much to be done. Urgent is preparing for the charter school fair on January 8th. Ms. Moeller and Mr. Parish will help Ms. Shadowens on the school fair given their previous experience. Others are welcomed to help.
3. Academic. Ms. Moeller reported that the Academic team has had a couple of meetings to discuss the middle school and curriculum map.
4. Facilities. Mr. Jax said they are working on a feasibility study for expansion. He met with staff and Karen Lu to discuss details of the expansion. Ms. Lu prepared a K-5 needs assessment. They are developing many contingency plans. A first grade parent with HVAC experience is interested in being on the facilities committee.

## VII. ADJOURN

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to adjourn at 9:04 PM was, seconded and passed.**

Minutes drafted by MaryAnn Choy, Board Secretary

Approved by vote of Board on: January 10, 2011