

Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes  
August 31, 2009

**BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Maryann Choy, Scott Jax, Taoyuan Li, Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller, Keri Norell, Doug Parish, Joe Yang, Naomi Mueller, Abigail Pribbenow, and Janine Trutna.

**DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE**

Betsy Lueth

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE**

Judith Darling and Nicole Thurmes.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Moeller called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Ms. Moeller introduced financial trainers Judith Darling and Nicole Thurmes of Beltz, Kes, Darling, and Associates.

**II. APPROVALS**

**Agenda:** Under “New Business,” two agenda items were added—discussion of a Special Education Advisory Committee and a recommended action regarding Charter School Partners. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda with these additions.

**08/10/09 Board Meeting Minutes:** A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes from the August 10, 2009 meeting of the school board.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**IV. FINANCIAL TRAINING**

Three handouts were distributed: “School Finance ‘101’”, “Summary of Charter School Law Changes,” and “Yinghua Academy Charter School Long Range Budget Projection Model, August 30, 2009.”

Ms. Darling and Ms. Thurmes covered the following topics:

- Primary revenue sources and drivers of revenue—enrollment, student attendance, ADMs (Average Daily Membership) vs. WADMs (Weighted Average Daily Membership), general education revenue, Lease Aid revenue, special education revenue, food service revenue.
- Key expenditures—salaries and benefits, lease, student related, operating, special ed, food service. Ms. Thurmes noted that she has seen amendments to lease aid agreements. Yinghua’s past lease was set at a base rate while the current lease allows for some flux in the school’s student population. October 1 is the date when child counts are to be submitted.

- Current year budgeting—monthly financial statements, profit and loss projections, key items on the balance sheet.
- Long term planning—budget model. The 2008-09 annual surplus Yinghua Academy approved (on 4/27/09) was \$12,093; the school has exceeded this with an actual surplus of \$52,051.
- Cash flow. The past state “hold-back” was 10%. This means that the state holds back 10% of what it owes the school until the end of the year. Schools traditionally have used their lines of credit or fund balances to make up for hold-backs. The Minnesota hold-back has been increased to 27% for the next two years. This creates a cash flow problem. Ms. Thurmes has worked on Yinghua Academy cash flow projections showing that the school is in an adequate position because of its positive fund balance.

Ms. Lueth also is working with Ms. Thurmes on six funding applications, three of which are from stimulus funds.

Ms. Lueth and Ms. Thurmes sent to Beth Topoluk a fifteen month cash flow projection showing that the school may need to use its credit line to meet cash flow needs of approximately \$50,000. This is related to the State’s 27% hold back.

## V. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

### **Enrollment**

Enrollment is 304 students against a budget projection of 313 enrolled.

75 – K (24 on the waiting list)

75 – 1<sup>st</sup> (14 on the waiting list)

50 – 2<sup>nd</sup> (3 on the waiting list)

47 – 3<sup>rd</sup> (3 openings)

23 – 4<sup>th</sup> (2 openings)

22 – 5<sup>th</sup> (3 openings)

12 – 6<sup>th</sup> (13 openings)

### **Curriculum**

- Teachers participated in two and half weeks of training.
- The school received a \$38,800 grant from the Chinese Han Ban for the middle school program. These funds will support technology as well as a sister school relationship. There has not yet been any news about the FLAP grant.
- Ms. Lien is designing K-5 curriculum maps.
- Ms. Lien is working on a Middle School Curriculum map which is differentiated from the K-5 map by its increased use of technology, exploratory clubs, and rigorous, individualized instruction. A logic curriculum will be added to the 6<sup>th</sup> and possibly 5<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Facilities**

- The missing boiler logs have been located but there is no indication in them of the break-down of the chiller or air handler control box.
- The school has signed a contract with Alliance for support of the HVAC and boiler. Alliance believes it will be able to fix the air handler control box for less than \$1,000.
- The boiler will be tested this week.
- Delivery of the glass door on the building's front has been delayed.
- Plumbing, electrical, carpet and elevator repairs will be complete this week.
- The school is in discussion with Minneapolis Pollution Control Agency regarding the housing of lithium bromide.
- Locks are being rekeyed.

### **Financial/Grant**

- The FLAP grant awards are expected to be announced in the first week of September.
- World Language grant reporting has been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education.
- Ms. Lueth and Mr. Parish have worked on a revised budget to be prepared by mid-September.
- The audit field work was completed last week. Results look positive and will be presented at the October 5 meeting of the Board.
- Ms. Lueth has submitted six applications for special education.
- Enrollment has been reduced in the budget from 313 to 304

### **Staffing**

- Two teachers will arrive after October 1. A third teacher was replaced due to visa complications.
- Han Ban exchange teachers have arrived and are staying with host families until they move into their apartment. They are in need of furniture and pots and pans.

### **Students/Families**

- There is one bus serving Minneapolis.
- Approximately 400 people attended the Back to School Picnic.
- The school has launched an ad campaign to encourage 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade enrollment.
- Approximately 700 people are expected at Back to School Night.

## **VI. UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS**

### **Facilities**

- Joe Yang circulated to the board via email the use agreement that the school has sent to the parks department. Key points covered in the agreement include the following:
  - The agreement defines the building space that Parks wants to use and the parks space the school wants to use;
  - It stipulates that Yinghua Academy must approve all building use by Parks, and the agreement itself does not approve Parks programs;
  - It requires Parks to provide adult supervision and to indemnify;
  - It defines the parks area the school can use for free and calls for one field to be dedicated to the school from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.;
  - Yinghua must indemnify;

- The agreement terminates on June 30, 2010.

#### •Expansion Plans

The facilities committee will soon reconvene to discuss expansion plans with the contractor. With the softening of the market, it may be a good time for Yinghua to exercise its option. Before Yinghua Academy can begin to consider exercising its option, the school must have an expansion plan in place.

#### **Financials**

- Mr. Parish distributed the Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards Compliance Report.

#### **Fundraising**

- Ms. Pribbenow reported that capital campaign solicitation letters went out to new parents. The committee also plans to re-solicit current parents who did not make a gift last spring. Some follow-up visits are underway. Mr. Parish reported that \$7,000 dollars have come in since the last report.
- Discussion ensued about approaching corporations and foundations. Most of these sources have application processes in place though relationship building is still a fundamental building block for seeking funds. Ms. Lueth reported that grant writing activity had been on hiatus during the summer. Ms. Pribbenow will ask board members to share information about any corporate, foundation or individual prospects they know.

#### **HR Committee**

- No current activity to be reported.

#### **Marketing**

- Ms. Trutna recommended that the board discuss marketing challenges and short-term marketing needs at the board retreat.
- Ms. Trutna met with Ms. Lueth to talk specifically about the marketing of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade programs and about targeting the Blaine and Coon Rapids geographic areas. Ms. Trutna created a structural outline for the school website delineating what information Marketing can provide and what information the school needs to supply. The Marketing Committee is looking for new members; a job description will be available at Back to School Night.

#### **Teacher Welcoming Strategy**

- Ms. Choy will ask the Han Ban teachers about household needs in their new apartment and will communicate this to the board and others.

#### **Technology Committee/Website**

- There were significant problems with the website last week but repairs have been completed. Problems are thought to have originated in the platform, and this confirms the need to switch to a new platform.

## **YACA**

- Ms. Mueller reported that YACA is reviewing and revising its bylaws. The two fundraiser projects they will pursue this year are Mabels Labels and the Blue Sky Guide.

## **Board Retreat**

- Date conflicts were discovered with the October 11 retreat date. New, pre-Thanksgiving dates will be circulated.
- Some topics to be covered include: preparation for changes in lease funding from the state, issues of growth (are we growing too fast?), facility expansion issues, decreases in Chinese adoptions and the potential impact on Yinghua, maintaining parent involvement, processes for addressing media and elected officials' misperceptions of charter schools, attrition, and the mission statement.

## **Charter School Law Changes and Yinghua By-Laws Update**

- Board members received a worksheet on changes in laws governing charter schools. The school by-laws will need to be amended to reflect the changes.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- Special Ed Advisory Committee—Ms. Li suggested that the board talk at the next meeting about establishing a Special Education Advisory Committee. She distributed a handout.
- Charter School Partners—Ms. Moeller reported that Charter School Partners (CSP) is building a community of high performing charter schools. CSP is a non-profit organization whose passion is to nurture and grow high quality charter schools in Minnesota. One of its programs is “TRIO” (Turning Results Into Outcomes), a data and assessment management software system available only to members. Using TRIO™, teachers and school leaders can make sense of complex data, build a culture of data driven decision-making, and improve the school’s business and academic performance. CSP subsidizes the start-up and first year’s maintenance costs of this system for its Partner Schools. The CSP membership fee is \$500.

## **BOARD ACTION**

A motion was made, seconded and carried for yinghua academy to join charter school partners.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m.