

**Regular Meeting of the Yinghua Academy School Board  
1616 Buchanan St. NE, Minneapolis, School Library**

Monday, January 31, 2011, 6:00 pm

final

**Board Members in Attendance**

Maryann Choy (Secretary), Taoyuan Li, Dr. Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller, Keri Norell, Abigail Pribbenow (Chair), Jen Shadowens, Kristin Swenson

**Board Members Not in Attendance**

Scott Jax, Doug Parish (Treasurer), Ben Weng

**Interim Executive Director in Attendance**

Ursina Swanson

**YACA Liaison in Attendance**

Alison Parks (Volunteer Coordinator, newly assigned YACA Liaison)

**Public in Attendance**

Denise Peterson (Friends) attended the meeting .

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Pribbenow called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to approve the agenda with changes to the order of presentation, was seconded and passed.**

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

IV. BOARD APPROVALS

A. Minutes from Regular Meeting of the School Board, January 10, 2011

**The MOTION by Ms. Shadowens to approve the January 10, 2011 minutes with changes, was seconded and passed.**

B. 2010 - 11 Calendar and Snow Day

Ms. Swanson reported that Yinghua had two snow days. The State requires 170 contact days. Yinghua's school calendar includes 174 contact days.

**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to not make up the two snow days, and if another snow day occurs, March 11, 2011 to be the potential make-up day, was seconded and passed.**

V. INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Ms. Swanson reviewed the Executive Director's report.

1. Teachers and staff are working busily on the Chinese New Year (CNY) performances. Administration will report recommendations to the Board for next year's CNY performance.
2. There have been teaching staff changes in the Middle School. A new 4th / 5th grade English teacher started and she will also teach 7th grade Spanish as an elective.
3. Ms. Swanson and Dr. Lien are meeting individually with each teacher to review their licensing and visa requirements.
4. Planning for next year staff and facilities has started. A walk-through with architects on structural change feasibility is scheduled for next week.
5. Enrollment numbers remain strong, except for the Middle School at 6th grade. There are 150 K applicants to date.
6. Ms. Calcaterra, Grant Administrator submitted an updated Grant Summary report to the Board.
  - a) An after school Chinese language / culture / calligraphy class for the community and new Middle School students is being considered to meet FLAP grant requirements.
  - b) Parents have asked about the proposed China trip for 8th graders at the January 25 Middle School parent meeting.
  - c) The Board asked how Confucius Institute and the Arts and Schools as Partners (ASAP) grants relate to YACA's art partnerships. More work is needed to coordinate artistic partnerships, grants and Yinghua's curriculum.

VI. ACADEMIC DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Lien reported.

1. Teachers choose paper/pencil format for MCA testing, except for 5th grade science testing will be computerized this year.
2. 2nd mid-term assessment work has begun. Teachers defined assessment questions for Math, CLA, ELA and Science.
3. MCA-II preparation meetings with Interim Executive Director and Academic Director have been conducted for all grades, 3-7. After CNY, MCA practice packets will be sent home with Grades 3-7 students.
4. Recruiting for next year has started with posting on several on-line sites for immersion classroom teachers and substitute teachers.
5. Yinghua was awarded a Startalk grant of \$125K for two summer programs, one for students and one for teachers training. Lead teachers are listed for each program.

## VII. SCHOOL BOARD REPORT - YACA

1. Ms. Parks reported that she will now be serving as YACA Board liaison to the School Board, as Ms. Straub has stepped down for personal reasons.
2. Ms. Straub has asked that YACA's report be earlier on the Board agenda, as it is reported here. Ms. Pribbenow will make efforts to do so.
3. Ms. Parks said YACA is conducting their own strategic planning by re-defining who YACA wants to be and defining role distinction between the newly created Yinghua Academy Foundation and YACA.
4. The volunteer coordinator role is now ex-officio member of YACA with a two year assignment. Inventory of volunteer needs was shared with Ms. Swanson. Ms. Parks is recruiting for a new volunteer coordinator and hopes to bring on board soon to participate in YACA's redevelopment.
5. Classroom Coordinator (CC) Liaison for next year is being recruited and identified within the next 30 days. Training is an issue because CC works starts before the first day of school. Ms. Parks will consult with the CC Liaison in August to help start up efforts.

## VIII. DISCUSSION

### A. Extension of Interim Executive Director (ED) Contract

1. Ms. Swenson said in her discussions with Ms. Swanson and Ms. Pribbenow, they have identified more needs to be done than can be completed by June. Ms. Swanson's work ethic is to fully implement initiatives she starts and is flexible in extending her temporary employment.
2. The Board would like to include Ms. Swanson's expertise in the school's strategic planning efforts that will drive the search for a permanent ED candidate, projected October - January 2012.
3. The Board appreciates the work Ms. Swanson has been doing to build a strong immersion school.
4. Ms. Swenson will work on details of the agreement per the Board's discussion with a flexible end date of June 2012.

**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to extend Ms. Swanson's employment letter of agreement to June 2012 and to have Ms. Swenson work with Mr. Parish on the details of the agreement, was seconded and passed.**

### B. Strategic Planning

1. With the Facilities Expansion Planning, many Board members and Administration recognize the need to start strategic planning this Spring. Ms. Pribbenow asked the Board to consider March and April dates that she identified on notes she shared with the Board. Board members will email Ms. Pribbenow their preference and scheduling conflicts.
2. Ms. Swenson can share her experience with the Prouty Project facilitation. Ms. Swenson will inquire with Team Works International if a Board member

could sit in on any strategic planning session to observe their facilitating process.

3. Ms. Pribbenow will ask these facilitators to submit a proposal to the Board to include objectives, methodology, cost and timeline.

C. Sisters Schools Relationship and Middle School Trip

*Discussion deferred to next meeting when relevant information will be available.*

D. Policy on Videos and Movies Shown At the School

Ms. Swenson learned that many more movies are being shown in the Middle School classroom than expected, including two R-rated movies in the 7th grade.

4. Ms. Swenson appreciates the immediate action Ms. Swanson and Dr. Lien took, once they became aware of this.
5. Ms. Swanson strongly believes movies should not be used as a substitute for instructional time. If a movie is useful, it can be assigned as homework.
6. Ms. Norell stated that depending on the objective, movies or videos can be used effectively in the classroom. A policy and procedure is needed for a teacher to follow that states the criteria to be met, the objective and how the video supports this construct.
7. Ms. Swenson will work with Ms. Swanson to draft a policy for Board approval.

## IX. SCHOOL BOARD REPORTS

A. Chair.

1. Ms. Pribbenow reported that she gave a State of School report at the YACA general meeting on Saturday, January 22 and will post it on the website.
2. Ms. Pribbenow and Ms. Moeller will meet with Beth Topoluk (Friends) to discuss what needs to be done for contract renewal.
3. The Board committed to review and approve the Bylaws revision at the next regular Board meeting.
4. The Board discussed the resources required to hold a Spring Carnival.  
**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to not have a Spring Carnival this year and to reevaluate the Carnival for next year, was seconded and passed.**
5. There has been some confusion in the community regarding Yinghua's sporting events. Administration had questions on insurance, liability of transporting students to events, scheduling issues with school staff; all of which are being worked out. Yinghua's sports program receives positive feedback and it builds community.

B. Secretary

1. Ms. Choy asked Board members to submit their volunteer hours to her for January.

C. Committees

1. Personnel, Kristin Swenson, Committee Chair
  - a) Board financial backgrounds are complete, except for one that is in process.

- b) The meeting was closed at 8:50 p.m to discuss staff efficiencies at the school. The meeting was reopened at 9:09 pm. Ms. Pribbenow summarized the closed session. The Board and Administration need to find ways to work more efficiently; no conclusions were reached.
- 2. Facilities, Scott Jax, Committee Chair
  - CSDC emphasized the need to have many contingency plans.
- 3. Marketing, Jen Shadowens, Committee Chair
  - a) Ms. Shadowens met with Ms. Swanson and agreed to conduct a mini survey to evaluate the newsletter effectiveness.
  - b) Classroom pages are being prototyped by a teacher and Treefort, writing a training summary. Three teachers will then, be trained on creating their classroom page. Early March, all teachers will be trained. Training includes the actual writing of the pages. Classroom pages will be password protected by class. Eventually, this will replace weekly grade newsletter.
- 4. Fundraising, Kristin Swenson, Committee Co-Chair
  - a) Ms. Swenson said red envelope letters for direct donations will go out on Friday.

D. ADJOURN

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to adjourn at 9:16 PM was, seconded and passed.**

Minutes drafted by MaryAnn Choy, Board Secretary

Approved by vote of Board on: February 17, 2011