

## YINGHUA ACADEMY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 27th, 2025, 6:00 p.m.

Yinghua Academy Media Center: 1616 Buchanan St NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413

**Board Members in Attendance:** Colleen Ebinger (Chair), Chris Klisch (Treasurer) (arrived at 6:08 p.m.), Cindy Moeller, Bryan Huang, Charles Robinson, Barbara Knott, Paul Haller, Nathan Bode, Paul Landahl, and Ying Zhang

**Board Members Not in Attendance:** Pamella Stommes, Yinglu Zeglin (Secretary)

**Executive Director in Attendance:** Dr. Luyi Lien

**YACA in Attendance:** Mike Wilson

**Public in Attendance:** Amy Erickson (Friends of Education)

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Ebinger called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

#### II. APPROVALS (2 minutes)

##### a. 1/27/2025 Agenda

Ms. Ebinger presented the draft agenda.

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

##### b. 12/16/2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Ebinger presented the minutes of the December Board meeting.

**The MOTION by Ms. Knott to approve the December meeting minutes was seconded and passed. Dr. Haller abstained.**

#### III. 2025-2026 School Calendar (16 minutes)

Dr. Lien presented the Yinghua 2025-2026 School Calendar. She explained date changes compared to previous calendars. There

was discussion about certain days off in the calendar including the timing of the days off for Lunar New Year

**The MOTION by Mr. Huang to approve the 2025-2026 Academic Calendar as presented with the option to move a date for Lunar New Year was seconded and passed.**

IV. Public policy landscape for charter schools (36 minutes)

Ms. Ebinger presented the current public policy landscape for Minnesota charter schools. The Star Tribune during the past year has done a series of investigative articles on charter schools. The articles focused on failing charter schools. Many of the schools had several issues including low standardized test scores, low enrollment, and financial distress. The articles were also critical of school authorizers and current Minnesota charter school law.

There is an expectation of charter school law changes during the current Minnesota state legislative session. An initiative by many legislators is to put a moratorium on the opening of new charter schools. Board members were also updated that the school received a request for data from the Star Tribune regarding any infractions with the school's authorizer.

The Board discussed ideas on what to do about the current public policy landscape and how to respond. Ideas included reaching out to state legislators, sharing positive charter school news, and coordinating responses with the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools.

V. Yinghua University 1/30 Webinar: "Charter School Finance Basics" (4 minutes)

Ms. Ebinger gave an update that the Yinghua University informational session on School Finance and Student Enrollment will be presented via webinar this coming Thursday, January 30, 2025.

VI. Recruiting New Board Members (7 minutes)

Ms. Knott, as a member of the Governance Committee, is working on updating the materials and information that board candidates receive prior to and after the election. There was discussion about compiling a list of potential Board candidates

and who that might be.

VII. FINANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE (22 minutes)

Mr. Robinson summarized the current financials, which are 50% complete for the 2024- 25 fiscal year. Expenditures are at 48%, and revenues are at 47% of the revised annual budget. There is currently a total net gain of \$160,295 across all funds. There are currently 855 students enrolled at the school.

Mr. Robinson said the Bond and Audit reports were submitted on time. He went on to say that many of the expense categories with high year-to-date budget percentages were as expected as they are paid upfront.

A revised 2024-2025 budget was presented to align with our Bond agreements. The new budget includes the following changes: increasing student headcount from 840 to 846 students, increasing revenue from state aid, and salary expenses increasing by about \$170k due mostly to additional special education costs. The Food Service fund was also updated based on final audit numbers. The net effect of the budget is an additional \$436k in revenue and \$377k in expenses with a resulting new net income of \$10k.

**The MOTION by Mr. Bode to approve the revised 2024-2025 Budget was seconded and approved.**

VIII. FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE UPDATE (9 minutes)

Mr. Huang provided updates from the Fundraising committee. There are currently 41 businesses interested in sponsoring Chinese New Year. The committee is asking for more names. There is a website unaffiliated with Yinghua Academy that is selling Yinghua gear; the school is asking them to stop. Ms. Moeller is assisting in the cleanup of roles between the fundraising organizations. The committee is looking at new fundraising ideas. Finally, the committee is asking Dr. Lien for her top 3 requests this coming year to be supported by fundraising.

Ms. Moeller gave an update on Friends of Yinghua Academy initiatives. The agreement with the Minneapolis Foundation to set up a Longevity Fund is almost complete. Dr.Lien will be an ex-officio board member of the organization.

IX. GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE (7 minutes)

Dr. Haller presented the following policy for its first reading that included updates for marijuana, based on recent Minnesota state law changes.

- Policy 418 – Drug-Free Workplace / Drug-Free School

Dr. Haller mentioned the following policies are up for their second readings.

- Policy 102 - Equal Educational Opportunity
- Policy 415- Mandatory Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults

**The MOTION BY Mr. Landahl to approve Policy 102 - Equal Educational Opportunity and Policy 415 - Mandatory Reporting of Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults, was seconded and approved.**

Dr. Haller went on to provide an update on Policy 522 and potential changes that will be needed related to the federal court decision vacating Federal 2024 Final Rule on Title IX.

X. Executive Director's Report (15 minutes)

Dr. Lien provided updates from her executive director's report. Student enrollment is currently 855 and attendance is above 96%. Students have been competing in various competitions including a spelling bee, Yinghua Voice competition and Science Expo.

There was a Lunar New Year Kickoff Staff Meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup>. The school hosted a sample Immersion class on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup> with 66 potential kindergarteners attending. The open enrollment period runs from January 8<sup>th</sup> to February 13<sup>th</sup> with the lottery following.

The staff's required professional training is on track. The school hosted an alumni reunion on January 4<sup>th</sup> with 130 attendees. There is an upcoming cultural exchange with The High School Affiliated to Renmin on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENT (0 minutes)

None

XIII. ADJOURN (1 minute)

Ms. Ebinger concluded the meeting.

**The MOTION by Ms. Moeller to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. was seconded and passed.**

Minutes drafted by Nathan Bode

Approved by vote of the Board on 2/18/25.