

Integrated Day Charter School
Governing Board Minutes
April 13, 2011

Absent: Dr. Frank Maletz, Jason Jones

No public comment.

●A motion was made by Michael Seroussi and seconded by Michele Devine to approve the February 16, 2011 IDCS Governing Board minutes. The vote was nine in favor, 0 opposed. Since we did not have a quorum for the March meeting, there are no minutes.

Director's Report

Corrective Action Plan (from renewal) – areas of certification have been addressed. Our Leadership Team is looking at a design of teacher assignments in middle school. The need for our social worker on a full time basis will be discussed at the Strategic Planning Workshop on May 7.

School Calendar – A change from student led conferences to teacher led conferences in November is under consideration, with student led conferences in February.

Students in grades 5-8 took part in Oliver Twist, which was staged at NFA.

Business Report

Effective April 1, the Thermos on the Thames condos will be under new management.

The Health & Safety Committee is considering the removal of trees on the back side of Crown St., with the addition of an exit from the Crown St. lot out to Thermos Ave. One proposal was received (see Business Report).

See Finance Committee notes for budget preparation information.

Carl Davis gave a brief overview of healthy food certification, which will be an action item at the May Board meeting.

Committee Reports

Governance – see minutes provided.

Planning – Beth McCaffery will facilitate the Strategic Planning Retreat on May 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Curriculum – The Committee discussed what would be included in curriculum binders. They are working on creating a sample activity assessment lesson.

Finance – The Committee reviewed the first draft of the 2011-2012 budget; it includes the teacher adjusted salary schedule. Non-staff pay rates will be adjusted when the April cost of living index is available. Our insurance agent is providing information on possible changes and costs for next year.

Correspondence will be presented in Executive Session.

Discussion

Six policies were provided to Board members for review. Comments should be forwarded to the Governance Committee via Laura McMahon, Michael Seroussi or Anna James. Required policies will be reviewed and adopted first, recommended policies second.

School Calendar – A motion was made by Brianne Temple and seconded by Michael Seroussi to approve the 2011-2012 IDCS calendar with minor changes in labeling. The November conferences will indicate “C” until a decision is made between student led or parent led conferences. The vote was nine in favor, 0 opposed.

Strategic Plan Workshop - The Board discussed who should be invited to the Strategic Planning Workshop on May 7. Beth McCaffery will be consulted, as the size of the group is a consideration.

2011-12 Budget – Mary Osten suggested we compare the reimbursement rate for special education vs. the cost of two full time special education teachers, since a student with significant needs has left. There will be an increase in this budget, based on the April COLA, for non-certified staff.

- A motion was made by June Morrone and seconded by Jen Spangle to go into Executive Session. The vote was nine in favor, 0 opposed.

Executive Session

- A motion was made by Jason Jones and seconded by Brianne Temple to end Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. The vote was nine in favor, 0 opposed.

- A motion was made by Mary Osten and seconded by Jen Spangle to hold a spot for a kindergarten student in 2012-2013. The vote was 8 in favor, 0 opposed, with Jason Jones abstaining. Anna James will send a letter to the parents.

- A motion was made by Jason Jones and seconded by Paul Rak to direct the Board chair to respond to the parent’s letter regarding the pledge to inform him that it has been addressed by the Director. Jason, Paul.

- A motion was made by Mary Osten and seconded by Michael Seroussi to authorize a 2.75% salary increase for the business manager. The vote was 1 opposed, eight in favor.
- A motion was made by Michael Seroussi and seconded by Brianne Temple to authorize a 2.75% salary increase for the director. The vote was 1 opposed, eight in favor.

Next meeting: May 18, 5:30 p.m.

Integrated Day Charter School
Director's Agenda Items
March 16, 2011

- I Update on the State Charter Renewal – Corrective Action plan
- II School Calendar 2011 – 2012
- III Executive Session

Integrated Day Charter School

Charter Renewal Corrective Action Plan

The Integrated Day Charter School community appreciates the opportunity to refine our practice and to ensure that we provide students with a stimulating and high caliber instructional program. Areas of needed improvement, refinement or clarification were noted in certification, curriculum and finances. After reviewing the comments made, the following action steps and recommendations will be implemented.

Certification:

A review of the certified staff file, certification database and information collected at the visit through interview and observation by the SAR team certification consultant resulted in the following findings and comments:

1) The certified staff file (ED 163) is incomplete and inaccurate. Some staff are not listed and assignments for some staff are not accurately reported. The following specific issues were noted:

1. Title I instructors (2) need to be added to the staff file;
2. School social worker needs to be added to the staff file;
3. Staff assignments for teachers in grades 7 & 8 need to be updated in the certified staff file to accurately reflect what the teachers are actually teaching.

- *The Title I instructors mentioned are actually Title I tutors, hourly employees, and are not listed on the ED 163 file.*
- *The school social worker had been added to the ED 163 file.*
- *Seventh and eight grade staff assignments will be updated in certified staff file to reflect subjects taught.*

2) All grade 7 & 8 teachers are currently teaching math. Only one part-time teacher currently holds an endorsement for math. Three teachers do not hold an appropriate endorsement or authorization to teach math. Grade 7 & 8 language arts teacher is not appropriately certified for language arts.

- *A 7 & 8 grade teacher has applied for a Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP) for middle school mathematics. He is currently one course away from cross endorsement. One additional teacher will apply for a Temporary Authorization for Minor Assignment in mathematics.*
- *One 7 & 8 grade teacher is certified for language arts instruction and will teach the language arts class.*

- *Given the restrictive nature of finances and the small size of the middle school, in the long term, we will work to have all teachers attain cross endorsements in pertinent content areas.*

3) School Business Administrator: Provisional Certificate is currently expired. Applied in November prior to expiration date. Additional application materials were requested November 11, 2010, in order to complete the application process and determine eligibility for the professional or possible reissuance of provisional.

- *Certificate has been reissued and is current. A copy of certificate in question is attached.*

Curriculum:

The State Appointed Renewal team found two areas of the Integrated Day Charter School that needed to be addressed. One was the Pre-Kindergarten mathematics curriculum and the second area was the seventh and eighth grade Language Arts curriculum:

1) There was no evidence of a Pre-Kindergarten Mathematics curriculum.

- *There is a Pre-Kindergarten Mathematics curriculum. It was in the Pre-Kindergarten classroom and was not with the other documents.*

2) The seventh and eighth grade curriculum is incomplete.

- *The Language Arts committee is in the process of completing a revision of Language Arts curriculum. Two sections, the scope and sequence and assessment, will be completed by May 2011.*

Financial Management Component:

The Office of Internal Audit reviewed and evaluated the Integrated Day Charter School financial management system. In the "Internal Control Comments" section of the review, four suggestions were made by the reviewers to improve and refine internal controls at the Integrated Day Charter School. The four items are followed by the IDCS action plan:

1) The Staff Use of Facilities policy should be amended to include a provision which prohibits employees from using the school for personal business.

- *Staff Use of Facilities: The school leadership team will re-evaluate the current policy and incorporate a section addressing personal use of the school facility*

and equipment. The policy revisions will be forwarded to the Governance Committee at their April 2011 meeting and subsequently to the Governing Board.

2) The school's Donations policy should be amended to address cash handling procedures for all donation amounts.

- **Donations:** *The Donations policy will be expanded to identify cash handling procedures and accountability for all donation amounts, not just amounts over \$100. The policy revisions will be forwarded to the Governance Committee at their April 2011 meeting and subsequently to the Governing Board.*

3) Formal policies prohibiting salary advances/employee loans and related party transactions and other conflicts of interest should be established.

- **Policies and Procedures:** *The Business Manager will draft suitable additions to current accounting policies and procedures to address these items. The policy revisions will be forwarded to the Governance Committee in May 2011 and Governing Board.*

4) The school could strengthen its internal control over inventory by either utilizing asset identification tags or by identifying each inventoried equipment item by serial number.

- **Inventory System:** *The school currently tracks IT and A/V equipment by serial number, if they have a serial number, in the ITAM Direct IT management program. Plant equipment that has a serial number is tracked in the Maintenance Direct work order system. Other equipment/major supply inventories are not individually identified by number. Although the school would like to implement a complete asset tagging inventory system, it is not feasible given current funding levels. This will be considered for future action when state funding for charter schools returns to equitable levels.*

**IDCS, Inc
Governing Board
Business Report
April 13, 2011**



Facilities:

➤ **Condo Association:**

- The association's board has changed management companies, effective April 1st. The on-site staff have been notified of termination, effective April 9th.

➤ **Building:**

- The Health & Safety Committee had discussed the possibility of removing the pine trees on the back side of the Crown St. building and adding an exit from the Crown St. lot out to Thermos Ave. Myron Huntley obtained one quote for budget purposes. The proposal, from Lawn Care Etc., was \$1,600 for tree work and \$2,650 for installing a new exit from the parking lot.

Finance:

- Finance Committee met April 6th. See minutes.

Food Service:

- **Healthy Food Certification**-The Board is required, on an annual basis, to certify participation or non-participation in the state's healthy food program. This will be an action item at the next meeting.

Personnel:

- N/A

Other:

- N/A

Committee chairs can provide their minutes to the Business Manager for posting. Minutes/reports will be posted with monthly Board minutes.

Minutes of the IDCS Governance Committee meeting on Tuesday
April 5, 2011

Present: Laura McMahon, Jen Spangle, Anna James, Michael Seroussi

Absent: Jason Jones

5:05 - Meeting called to order

Discussed sibling policy pros and cons. Further discussion necessary. Will ask Sandy Quarto how many non-siblings in top 5 of each grade waiting list. Laura McMahon will email Sandy, June and Rachel and request thoughts from them on a sibling policy.

Discussed policies on Donations and Use of Facilities. Will be amended and discussed as 1st reading at the Board Meeting.

Business Manager contract will be completed for discussion for next month's governance meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance - Michael Seroussi brought this up "for the record". Director Anna James stated that the policy is being followed and "An opportunity is given" for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance daily.

5:45 - Executive session - discussed "parent member" board applications since Jason Jones is leaving the board in June and there will be a parent opening.

6:00- Exited Executive Session

Laura McMahon will email two parent applicants to make sure they are still interested. If so, they will be asked to attend the next Governance meeting to be interviewed.

6:10 - Meeting adjourned.

IDCS Finance Committee – 4/6/2011

Agenda/Notes

Called to order at 2:45

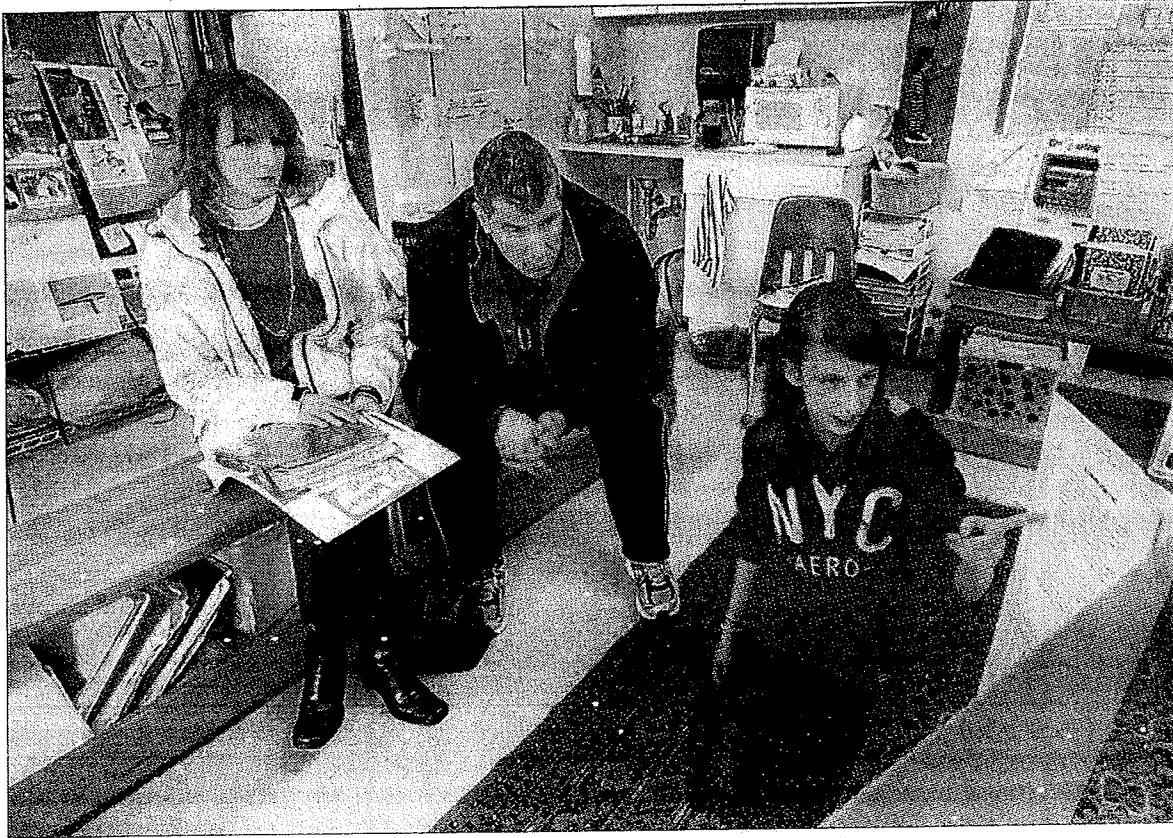
Present: Anna James, June Morrone, Michele Devine, Carl Davis

1. FY12 Budget preparation

- Do not realistically anticipate any increase in state funding
- Draft budget highlights:
 1. Two teachers will move on schedule to 6th Yr
 2. One teacher on LOA – replacement budgeted at top step.
 3. Social Worker will move to certified position
 4. Non-contract staff step movement – schedule to be adjusted when April cost of living data available
 5. Health insurance increase estimated at 10%
 6. First draft has \$311,651 deficit, but includes 2 possible teacher openings at top step
 7. Discussed various personnel/position changes that may be considered
 8. Looking at other alternatives to reduce costs
- School leadership will continue work on draft 2011-12 budget to be presented to the committee at the May meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at 2:45

Parent conferences add a twist



TALI GREENER/THE BULLETIN

Integrated Day Charter School sixth-grader Megan Smith, 11, shows her parents, Heather and Mike, what she is working on in class Thursday during a student-led conference, the Norwich school's version of the parent-teacher conference.

Students take the lead in explaining their progress

By ANNA MARIA LEMOINE

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NORWICH — Megan Smith stood in her black Converse sneakers Thursday and lectured her parents on spelling and math.

The sixth-grader's tone was as laid-back as her attire, but her parents got the gist.

"She's doing much better in those subjects," her mother, Heather Smith, said. "And she needs to prepare more on her research project speech."

Twice a year at the Integrated Day Charter School,

traditional parent-teacher conferences take a twist — students lead the 30-minute sessions about their own progress.

"You have to go through every subject and go over the good things and what you need to improve on," Megan said. "I like the fact I get to talk more. This sounds a lot better than when my mom had parent-teacher conferences when she was in school."

Began 14 years ago

Student-led conferences began 14 years ago when instruction at the kindergarten through eighth-grade school began. Every

grade level uses the process, and it's never been abandoned because of the life lessons it instills, Melissa Dearborn, a fifth- and sixth-grade teacher at the school, said.

"We put a big emphasis on self-reflection here," Dearborn said. "We want them to be able to look for their own growth and the things they need to work on. They own the job they're doing. It's not coming from an outside place, like a teacher."

Report cards

Before the conferences, which run across three days, report cards are sent home. Parents and teachers are

'We put a big emphasis on self-reflection here.'

Melissa Dearborn, teacher

in constant communication, and a short question-and-answer session with the teacher follows each conference.

"There aren't too many surprises at these sessions," Heather Smith, a Norwich native, said. "They hold her accountable and give her a chance to sit down with us and really give us feedback."

This is so much better than when I was a kid and mom would go into the classroom with the teacher and you had to sit out in the hall. You want to talk about high anxiety."

Charter School Director Anna James said there are various benefits to handling school conferences this way.

"Not only are they empowering for students," she said. "But they are an essential aspect of communication with families that are learning English and can't communicate readily with the teacher. We have families who speak Spanish, Arabic, Hindi and Chinese, and the children, who are bilingual, are able to relate their progress to their parents in their native language."

On Thursday, one of Megan's revelations to her parents was that she's the class zookeeper to Rocko and Popi, two fire-bellied toads.

"I practiced for my conference for about a week," Megan said. "I was relaxed. I think it went pretty good, normal for me."

At a glance

The state Board of Education authorizes charter schools. They provide small-scale educational programs managed by a governing board comprised of teachers and parents or guardians of the students enrolled in the school and may include community members. Charter schools offer a range of educational programs, small class size and enhanced teacher-parent communication.

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education

See CONFERENCES, B2

Charter schools pleading for more funds

State aid has been level for past 3 years

By ANNA MARIA LEMOINE

The Bulletin

Posted Mar 23, 2011 @ 11:39 PM



Norwich, Conn. — Collin Schaller, a kindergartner at the Integrated Day Charter School, will get a lesson today in books. After all, his father, Walter Schaller, said, his 5-year-old son's education at the charter school centers more around textbooks.

"It's what education should be," Schaller said. "His learning is more diverse that way."

Walter Schaller will represent Norwich charter school parents in Hartford, making the trek to the Legislative Office testimony at an appropriations hearing today on school finance reform.

His main objective: make a plea to state education officials for charter schools to receive more money.

And his message to Collin: "Speak out," he said. "I don't know if it's my place to, but money should be even across the schools) do so much more with the money per child. Why are they getting less?"

Connecticut charter schools have not seen an increase in their state-allotted \$9,300 per student for the last three years. They are not expecting that amount to increase for the 2011-12 school year.

"We haven't experienced a dramatic change thus far, but flat funding is beginning to take its toll," Anna James, the principal of Integrated Day Charter, said. "If this continues for the next five years, it will have a dramatic impact."

The 23 charter schools across the state, which enroll more than 4,500 students, do not receive any federal stimulus money because they're not included in the state's Education Cost Sharing allocations.

"Most of the community and even our own parents do not know our challenges," James said. "We've managed to keep our instructional program intact, but we're going to have to start looking at our options for cuts soon."

The school already has pared its remedial teacher's hours down from full time to part time. Next year, cuts could hit paraprofessionals.

Integrated Day Charter has a prekindergarten through eighth-grade enrollment of 330, with an 800-student waiting list on a total annual budget of \$3.5 million, school business manager Carl Davis said.

Nearly \$14,400 per month comes out of that budget to pay on two mortgages, and another \$11,000 per month to pay on a construction loan. Additionally, \$422,000 is allotted for its regular operations budget.

"We're housed in an old factory with 16-foot-high ceilings," Davis said. "It's a very unique setting, but it's very challenging reality of the world. Costs are going up, so if you don't get more funding, the services you can provide are going to go down."

Abby Rios, who lives in Greeneville, has two children on the waiting list to attend Integrated Day Charter. The stagnation of charter schools has her pondering what the school's future will look like.

"There's enough going on with the schools in the area," Rios said. "We need these kids to get a proper education. It's unfair the state won't give more. If more schools have to be shut down, what does that mean for our future?"