

Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2007

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Cindy Moeller, Michael VanKeulen, Larry Yan, Sandy Doubek

BOARD MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Doug Parish, Kristina Schatz, Margaret Wong

DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE

Betsy Lueth

Meeting Called to Order at 6:35 P.M. by Ms. Moeller.

AGENDA

After several additions were made to the agenda, a motion to approve the agenda was forwarded by Mr. VanKeulen. The motion was seconded by Mr. Yan and was approved unanimously.

2/20/2007 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Corrections and one addition were made to special board meeting minutes - a motion to approve the 2/20/2007 special board meeting minutes with corrections and additions was forwarded by Ms. Doubek. The motion was seconded by Mr. VanKeulen and was approved unanimously.

2/26/2007 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

With two changes - to correct the spelling of Mr. VanKeulen and Betsy Lueth's name - a motion to approve the 1/29/07 board meeting minutes was forwarded by Mr. VanKeulen. The motion was seconded by Ms. Doubek and was approved unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- 1) Minnesota Advocates for Immersion (MAIN) Meeting
Ms. Lueth is the chair of the teachers subcommittee. They discussed grant proposal with Tara Fortune and we are back on track with assisting with the grant proposal with CARLA.
- 2) Research
Ms. Lueth and Ms. Lien are creating the framework for teaching Chinese with the possibility for delaying children learning pinyin, i.e., first teaching children English-phonetics characters before pinyin. They are reviewing the book How Chinese Kids Learn To Read and Write.
- 3) Federal Grant Amendment
Ms. Lueth submitted the Federal Grant week of March 4th, 2007. Waiting for feedback from Cecilia Cannon of the Minnesota Department of Education on the grant proposal.

4) Summer Program

Summer Program note went was sent to parents on Thursday March 6th, 2007. Fee for each session is \$485.00. Ms. Lueth has received a few questions from parents and a lot of excitement for the program. To date there are twenty applications and a capacity for eighty students per session. Potentially yielding around \$11,000.00, which may be used for development or licensing for teachers.

5) First All-School Field Trip

Students took a bus to the CAAM New Years performance at St. Catherine's College. Ten Yinghua Academy students were part of the performance.

6) Enrollment

Ms. Lueth will be handing out to board members at each meeting a spreadsheet for enrollment updates. To date for the 2007 – 2008 school year we have 59 students enrolled for kindergarten with a maximum of 50 students, 47 students enrolled for first grade with a maximum of 50 students, 27 students enrolled for second grade with a maximum of 25 students, 16 students enrolled for third grade and 14 students enrolled for fourth grade.

7) Best Buy Grant

Yinghua Academy received a \$5,000 grant from Best Buy.

UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Parish is out of town and will return with a “financial deep-dive” at the March 26th, 2007 board meeting.

FACILITIES REPORT

The general idea is to expand to the additional 2000 square feet of space (in the front right corner of the 1355 Pierce Butler Route building) at the current location for the 2007 – 2008 school year, with the possibility of creating a new library, resource room, offices and a new computer room in the additional space. In addition, consideration is being given to dividing the current first grade classroom into two classrooms and adding two new windows. For the following years, some considerations are to divide a few more classrooms, adding new windows to all of the classrooms, converting current office space to a new classroom, and by the fifth year, reviewing options for a portable classroom or a Yinghua Academy second building.

YACA UPDATE

YACA board meeting is Wednesday March 14th, 2007. YACA general meeting will be held Wednesday March 28th, 2007 at Yinghua Academy. Ms. Lueth asked YACA to schedule a spring clean-up day and a flower-planting day in the spring.

Discussions were held around a spring carnival. Ms. Lueth recommended a kids spring carnival to be held on Friday May 18th from 5 pm to 8 pm. Ms. Lueth outlined her vision for the spring carnival and decided to volunteer as the coordinator of the carnival with assistance from YACA board members and other parents to help with planning and organizing the event. The event could possibly combine with new family get together and could tie in with a uniform swap.

Other ideas for the Spring Carnival are:

1. Potluck dinner
2. Children performances
3. An activity including the new students for the 2007 – 2008 school year
4. Booths with the YA teachers and parents sponsoring and working at the booths. We would sell tickets for each booth event like 10, 25 or 50 cents/pc and guarantee a prize each time.

Ideas for booths are:

- a. A Duck Pond – (rubber ducks in a wading pool with prizes stuck on them)
- b. Minnow Races
- c. Ring toss
- d. Fishing Pond (kids throw their fishing pole over a large sheet wall and prizes are hooked on the fishing pole)
- e. Dragon Boat Races
- f. Large Inflatable Bouncing Tent

Ms. Doubek and Ms. Moeller will bring this information to the YACA board meeting on Wednesday March 14th, 2007.

BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS

Ms. Moeller sent a note to parents on Thursday March 7th, 2007 outlining the transition to an elected board and the board election timeline. To date no parents have contacted Ms. Moeller with questions or comments. The board discussed some potential board members.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Ms. Schatz was out of town so no update on the marketing strategy. Ms. Lueth made some suggestions for long-term marketing in the local Chinese Newspapers for advertising employment opportunities and keeping the community informed and bridging the connection between Yinghua Academy and the Chinese community.

NEW BUSINESS

FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES

Ms. Moeller outlined in a document some possibilities for future Yinghua Academy Board Meetings, with the purpose of returning to having board meetings more often than once-a-month. Board discussed meeting approximately every three weeks. The board reviewed the calendar and identified the following board meeting dates for the next six months: March 26th, April 16th, May 7th, May 21st, June 4th, June 25th, July 16th, August 6th, August 27th and September 17th. Ms. Doubek made a motion to approve the future board meeting dates. Mr. VanKeulen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Deferred discussion until the March 26th, 2007 board meeting.

IDEAS TO EXPLORE FOR FUTURE DIRECTION

The board has always planned and has consistently communicated to parents that discussions will be held during the 2007-2008 school year regarding “growing” the school beyond K-5th grade. During the 2007-2008 school year the oldest students at Yinghua will be in the 4th grade, so this will allow sufficient time to do whatever is required, e.g., getting the permission of our sponsor and of the Minnesota Department of Education, to expand the grades that Yinghua Academy serves.

However, Ms. Moeller wanted to share a new idea with the board to get their very preliminary thoughts and feedback about whether this idea seems worth considering. The idea is basically to keep Yinghua Academy as a kindergarten through 5th grade school (at the current location) and to start an international middle school 6th grade through 8th grade at a different location. Most likely, this school would be developed as a separate charter school with a separate board and would also, therefore, be eligible for considerable federal charter school start-up funding to support the purchase of computers, books, and furniture and to support professional development for the staff.

Mornings would be typical middle school classes with a language immersion component for the rest of the day, which would be designed as a project-based learning program and which would enable students to work on projects in their immersion language and to continue developing their oral and written skills and their vocabulary. This school could potentially serve students from all language immersion programs, with a separate program for each language in the afternoon. In addition, the school could offer another alternative for the afternoon, i.e., intensive language instruction, either for students who want to pursue a third language or students who attended elementary school in English. Ms. Moeller also suggested that this school might want to incorporate the International Baccalaureate Curriculum, though she does not have enough information about IB at this point to be confident that this is a good idea. Ms Moeller commented that, according to the website for IB North America, Robbinsdale Middle School is the only middle school in the Twin Cities Metro Area that offers the International Baccalaureate Curriculum.

The board thought this sounds like an interesting idea to consider along with expanding the current school to K-8, when it is clear what the level of interest is among parents. Mr. VanKeulen recommended looking for a partnership with a University, which would strengthen the college level international experience.

MEETING WITH DICK COHEN

Ms. Moeller gave an overview to the board of the March 3 meeting with Dick Cohen, who is the state senator from Mac-Groveland and Highland Park area and who is the head of the Senate Finance Committee. The parents who attended the meeting shared with Senator Cohen their enthusiasm for and commitment to the charter schools that their children attend. Many also expressed concern that the legislature will take steps that will not be in the best interests of charter schools. Approximately 25 people, who live in Senator Cohen's District (64) and whose children attend charter schools, participated in this meeting. The participants represented at least 7 charter schools and included representatives from 4 Yinghua Academy families. There is a Charter School Day at the Capitol Wednesday March 14th, 2007. Ms. Moeller will encourage Yinghua parents in the 2007 – 2008 school year to get more involved with their legislatures in support of Charter Schools.

FRIENDS OF ASCENSION MEETING

Ms. Moeller discussed with the board the meeting that Friends of Ascension will have on Thursday March 15th, 2007, at Yinghua Academy. Representatives from all schools that Friends of Ascension sponsors will be attending. The main focus for discussion is to talk about segregation of duties, i.e., duties related to managing the school's finances, and guidelines for adequate segregation of duties for all Friends of Ascension Charter Schools.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Doubek motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. VanKeulen seconded that motion and the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm for a closed meeting to discuss a personnel matter.