

Yinghua Academy School Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 18, 2010
FINAL

Board Members in Attendance

Maryann Choy, Scott Jax, Taoyuan Li, Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller (Chair), Keri Norell, Doug Parish (Treasurer), Joe Yang, Abigail Pribbenow (Secretary), Janine Trutna (by phone)

Board Members Not in Attendance

Naomi Mueller

Director in Attendance

Betsy Lueth

YACA Representative in Attendance (*ex officio*, non-voting)

None

Public in Attendance

None

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Moeller called the meeting to order at 6:05.

II. APPROVALS

A. Agenda:

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda with changes.

B. 02/22/10 Board Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve with corrections the minutes of the February 22, 2010 meeting of the board.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Secretary Abigail Pribbenow is working with Volunteer Coordinator Alison Parks to track board volunteer hours. At each board meeting, board members should fill out the circulated spreadsheet to report their volunteer hours for the previous month.

B. Board members who bring materials to hand out to colleagues at the meeting should bring 14 copies. A copy of each item brought to the meeting or emailed in advance of the meeting will be kept in a binder in the school office.

- C. Timing of sending out materials. Ideally, board members should email materials for board meetings to fellow board members one week before the next meeting. At the latest, materials should be emailed by 9 p.m. two days in advance of the next meeting.

V. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Enrollment Update:

Current Year:

Grade	Current	Wait List
0	75	15
1	75	9
2	50	2
3	45	0
4	25	0
5	22	0
6	11	0

Next Year:

Grade	Current	Wait List
0	75	77
1	75	16
2	75	14
3	50	5
4	48	0
5	25	3
6	25	2
7	13	0

B. Curriculum

1. The school purchased a 25 unit MacBook mobile computer lab with multimedia software. Ms. Lueth negotiated the inclusion of iWorks in the software package. This technology supports curriculum development and design objectives in the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant.
2. A Middle School curriculum for science and math is currently being developed by educational assistants funded through the FLAP grant.
3. The academic director along with the lead teacher for the Star Talk summer camp program, will travel to Atlanta, Georgia, per the requirements of the Star Talk grant on April 16 and 17.

4. The academic director and executive director, as per FLAP grant requirements, will present at the Asia Society and College Board National Chinese Language Conference in Washington, D.C., on April 23 and 24. The session is focused on Chinese teacher training for early language instruction.
 5. Action research training provided by Dr. Jerry McClelland and Dr. Jane Plihal will be complete at a final training session on April 5. Action research training, which teaches teachers how to be researchers, is required for Yinghua teachers under the FLAP grant. Teachers learned about formulating a question around a classroom need, either academic or behavioral, then deciding a solution to that need and implementing it. Finally, the teacher gathers results and formulates an opinion based on the research. Knowledge and use of this process will strengthen and enhance teaching at Yinghua.
 6. Review of the school's instructional model will begin in April. This process will help the school to determine if its staff structure is viable. By the end of next year, the school will be K-5 immersion school with a 50-50 dual track program for middle school students. FLAP grant money will be used to determine how to staff the dual track program.
 7. The school has hired a bilingual science teacher from Taiwan. He will teach in both English and Chinese.
- C. Facilities—Ms. Lueth will prepare a facility needs report for the first May meeting of the board.
- D. Reporting—The school has completed a transportation report. The report confirms that Yinghua Academy will provide its own transportation for eligible students rather than relying on transportation provided by the Minneapolis Public Schools.
- E. Staffing
1. Yinghua has hired a new special education teacher to begin after Spring Break. Special education staffing costs are supported through federal and resident district funds. Current special education teachers were handling a doubled case load.
 2. The school is supporting two additional H1B work permission applications for an additional second grade Chinese immersion teacher and a middle school science teacher as well as one H1B extension for an existing Kindergarten teacher.
 3. Teacher evaluations are nearly complete. Post-observation meetings are in process.
 4. The Q-Comp evaluation process is running smoothly. Teacher evaluations, classroom observation, curricular mapping, previewed lesson plans, and Q-Comp are a few of the many teacher accountability processes that Yinghua has in place. Yinghua exceeds the legally required accountability procedures for charter schools. Several board members commented that Yinghua Academy has come to be known for its excellence in many areas, and that this is something that our parent and family community should hear more about, perhaps via the administrative newsletter. Via Q-Comp, teachers are eligible for \$3,200-\$4,200 paid on June 30.

5. The school will begin to give 2010-2011 staffing employment letters, based on board approval, during the week of April 5.
6. No salary increases are budgeted for next year, but Ms. Lueth has developed a retention bonus model to help retain teaching staff. Ms. Moeller recommended that re-signing bonuses be paid on September 15 of the new school year. In past years Yinghua has increased salaries. Yinghua's pay scale is lower than that of Minnetonka's immersion school which will serve K-3 next year.

F. Students/Families/Safety

1. Two days of "lock down with warning" were required on March 10 and 11 due to a vague threat through an online source to all Minneapolis schools. During the two lock down days, all exterior and interior classroom doors were to be locked at all times. All students were escorted to and from areas in the school by an adult at all times, including bathroom breaks. Students seemed confident and unaffected. Teaching and learning was conducted as usual. On the second day of lock down, the school was not notified that the lock down directive had been lifted. Ms. Lueth and Mr. Schlueter contacted the Northeast Police Precinct to be sure that Yinghua Academy is on the list of schools to contact when such procedures are implemented and when they are lifted.
2. The SFC director spoke at the YACA general membership meeting regarding behavioral education.
3. The Art-A-Whirl event is well planned and will strongly connect Yinghua Academy to the NE artistic community.
4. Kindergarten "Round Up" (to be possibly renamed) will be on May 27 for all newly enrolled 2010-2011 Kindergarten students.
5. Ms. Lueth presented a 2010-2011 school calendar. Classes will begin before Labor Day 2010. Six professional days and 174 student contact days—two more than the Minneapolis Public Schools—have been scheduled.

A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the 2010-2011 school calendar as presented.

G. Financial/Grant

1. Financial Strategic Planning and School Board Long-Term Budget Summary
 - a. Since February, Ms. Lueth has been working on the school's budgets with Nichole Thurmes of BKDA.
 - b. At the final review of the financial documents presented at this meeting, Ms. Moeller noticed a discrepancy in enrollment numbers in the calculation of the fund balance at each year's end. Ms. Lueth amended the enrollment numbers and adjusted staffing numbers accordingly. By the end of this year Ms. Lueth expects that the school will have a 13% fund balance—this is different from what is listed on page five of the Long-Term summary.
 - c. The 2010-2011 fund balance numbers are solid, but, because of the predicted holdback/unallotment, Ms. Lueth and Mr. Parish are not certain of the fund balance percentages listed in the following years. The 2009-2010 holdback

will likely be \$500,000, and this will consume the school's savings of \$419,000 and require the school to use its line of credit. In order to reach a fund balance of 15% by 2013 (as required through the school's Friends of Education charter) the school needs to add \$80,000 annually to the fund.

2. Yinghua Grants Administrator Karen Calcaterra successfully has negotiated a general operating rate of 14.8% for all federal grants.
3. Ms. Lueth, Ms. Lien and Mr. Schlueter will evaluate decreasing expenses to see if there are any savings that can be made though the school's instructional model is strong, and tampering with it is risky. Ms. Lueth observed that sustaining a state-of-the-art immersion teaching program such as Yinghua's is costly. All-day kindergarten, for instance, costs \$110,000 annually and is an essential part of a successful immersion program. The school will not add English teaching staff next year.
4. The capital campaign fund raising total was decreased by \$20,000 for this year from \$60,000. Some pledges are still being completed at this stage.
5. A future potential revenue source for the school is website subscription sales providing access to the Yinghua curriculum.
6. Teacher and full time staff re-signing bonuses are proposed for the next three years though the board will vote to commit to only the upcoming year's budget.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously upheld to approve the Retention Bonus Plan as outlined by Ms. Lueth.

7. Mr. Parish reported that the 2010-2011 budget shows a small surplus. The school cannot be much more frugal on its expenses. Mr. Parish proposes that the school begin to look at education models for sustainability rather than year by year bottom-up budget building. At the next meeting of the board, April 12, Mr. Parish and Ms. Lueth will present a sustainability plan.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously upheld to approve the 2010-2011 budget with a \$7,469 surplus.

VI. UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS

- A. Board Training—Ms. Moeller reported that by the end of April a list should be available of approved providers of charter school board training.
- B. Facilities and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board—Mr. Yang reported that he met with school attorney Craig Kepler, Ben Johnson and Bruce Sorenson of Piper Jaffray, Dave Weinstein, YBC president, Mr. Jax, Ms. Moeller, Ms. Lueth and Mr. Parish. The question of bonding is now on hold, but Mr. Yang feels that by June the school will be able to move forward on a facility plan which maximizes the current space. This is Mr. Yang's last board meeting, and he has transferred all of his files to Mr. Jax who will newly chair the Facilities Committee. The board applauded Mr. Yang for his exemplary service on the board and as the head of the Facilities

Committee. Ms. Lueth presented Mr. Yang a banner signed by all teachers and students as well as a gift from the board.

C. Financial

1. Mr. Parish distributed January and February 2010 financial statements.
2. The school will need to tap its credit line in May.
3. Ms. Moeller asked if the school needs to request an increase in its credit line. Mr. Parish replied that this is possible to do but since the school has never before drawn on its line the bank may not wish to raise the limit just yet.

D. HR Committee—The committee has not met since the last board meeting.

E. Marketing Committee

1. Ms. Trutna reported that the committee has sent a proposed marketing timeline for 2010-2011 to Ms. Lueth.
2. The committee is waiting for approval on two press releases.
3. At the next meeting Ms. Trutna will present information on the proposed use of “creating global citizens” as a possible tagline for the school.
4. At the next meeting, Ms. Trutna will present a FaceBook page layout.

F. Policy Review Committee—The committee will meet next week to compare current bylaws to the bylaws model provided by Beth Topoluk. Kent Pekel will attend the meeting.

G. Special Education Advisory Council—A parent couple agreed to lead the council but their child has now left the school. Ms. Li is beginning a search for a new committee leader.

H. Strategic Planning/Mission Measurement Committee—Ms. Lueth looked at feedback from committee members as well as from her mentor who offered a “scorecard” model to create a plan for continuous school improvement. The rest of the committee now is reviewing Ms. Lueth’s plan.

I. Technology Committee—The school has received quotes from two web design sources. One is an independent contractor and one is a company. Web design falls under the FLAP grant. The committee recommends that the school use the company, Treefort, for the web work which is likely to cost \$16,000 spread over two fiscal years. Brand and marketing analysis will be the next steps. The website also will support the US-China classroom connections in Middle School. Ms. Lueth will check references for the project bidders. The board will vote on this at the April 12 meeting.

J. YACA—A final push for the Red Envelope campaign is underway.

K. Fundraising

1. Ms. Pribbenow asked for board input on the possibility of distributing a fundraising annual report of progress to parents at the year-end picnic. The board was supportive of the project.
2. Ms. Pribbenow is working with Mr. Schlueter and a parents Kendra Lundeen, Ann Yin, and Naphtali Kahl to coordinate the school's participation in Art-A-Whirl on Saturday, May 15. This will be a community-building, family-friendly event. A few volunteers will be needed, and the committee will work with Ms. Parks to coordinate this.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The board reviewed a letter to be sent to families and staff to explain board election procedures. The board reviewed a table created by Ruth Straub and Abigail Pribbenow to be given to board candidates and to voters as an aide in evaluating what skills are represented on the board and what skills candidates bring. A question was raised about the proper procedure for terminating a board member's service on the board. Mr. Jax will examine the bylaws to evaluate the school's current procedures.
- B. Enrollment Policy—deferred to next meeting.
- C. Student Leave Policy—the board discussed the policy. The biggest concern with putting a policy into place is whether saving a spot for a student will have financial implications for the school's budget. The board suggested that phrasing regarding the school's financial position be added to the policy. The board will vote on the policy at the April 12 meeting.
- D. Date for Annual Meeting/Year-End Picnic: Sunday, June 6, 2010.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.