

Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2009

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Maryann Choy, Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller, Keri Norell, Doug Parish, Naomi Mueller, Abigail Pribbenow

BOARD MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Taoyuan Li, Joe Yang

DIRECTOR IN ATTENDANCE

Betsy Lueth

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

Ruth Straub

I CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Moeller called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

II APPROVALS

Agenda: Three additions were made to the agenda under “New Business”:

- 7) Determine whether to join Minnesota Association of Charter Schools (MACS), Ms. Lueth
- 8) Question about US-China Business Connections (UCBC), Ms. Pribbenow
- 9) Visit to St. Paul Prep Academy, Ms. Moeller

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda with the three additions, as above. The motion carried.

06/01/09 Board Meeting Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion carried.

III PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

IV DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Enrollment:

Total enrollment is 308; the goal in the budget is 313. Ads regarding openings have been placed in several newspapers. Ms. Lueth will confer with Mr. Yang regarding what enrollment figures were used for the budget.

- 75 – K (24 on the wait list)
- 75 – 1st (15 waiting)
- 50 – 2nd (3 waiting)
- 50 – 3rd (1 waiting)
- 23 – 4th (2 openings)
- 22 – 5th (3 openings)
- 14 – 6th (11 openings)

IV DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont.)

Curriculum:

Yinghua received very high ratings in the Startalk grant evaluation. Startalk is a prestigious grant administered by the National Foreign Language Center at the University of Maryland. Nationally renowned immersion educators Dr. Mimi Met and Janet Parker gave Yinghua Academy an exemplary review.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment test results for Yinghua Academy students are very positive. Though final results are not yet available, Ms. Lueth estimates that the school's overall pass rate is 86%.

New Yinghua teachers are receiving extensive immersion education through the Startalk grant.

In mid to late August Yinghua will learn whether it will receive funding through FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program, a grant program administered through the US Government).

No news on the Confucius Classroom grant administered by Hanban (Office of Chinese Language Council International).

Facilities:

An essential chemical was drained from the chiller before Yinghua moved in and the log books for the chiller are missing. Ms. Lueth will ask Mr. Yang to contact the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and Charter School Development Corporation (CSDC) to resolve the situation. A soil test confirmed the need for some remediation work.

Carpet installation has begun. Landscaping and outside construction will begin in the next few weeks and will be complete before the first day of school. Ms. Lueth will be out of the office for the next two weeks, and in her absence Ms. Choy will serve as decision maker regarding facilities and construction.

Construction costs are currently being covered in the \$225,000 with the following two exceptions: \$27,000 from the 08-09 move contingency has been used to cover painting and phone installation, and rent in the amount of \$18,000 for the half of June. Little of this can be reimbursed by CSDC.

Financial/Grants:

Yinghua has submitted to Friends of Education a twelve month cash flow analysis incorporating the Governor of Minnesota's 27% freeze on school funding. The analysis indicates that Yinghua may need to minimally utilize its Drake Bank line of credit in Spring 2010.

The fund raising goal was reduced on the budget to \$100,000.

The Stimulus Grant was received in the amount of \$70,000.

Reporting:

Lease Aid was submitted and complete on July 6, 2009.

IV DIRECTOR'S REPORT (cont.)

Staffing:

The school has hired its last two immersion classroom teachers directly from Taiwan. We will sponsor two H1B visas for them and for one other teacher this year. One of the new teachers, a kindergarten teacher, will not be allowed to start until after October 1, 2009.

Elizabeth Fei, a Chinese speaking part-time administrative assistant, has been hired to work 30 hours per week.

An offer has been extended for the position of After-School Program Coordinator.

Ms. Lueth has begun to outline job duties, required experience and a hiring process for the Dean of Students of Yinghua Academy. The exact title for this position will be determined at a later date. Budget projections for this position will be reviewed at the August 31 board meeting.

Ms. Lueth renegotiated the health insurance policy. The costs will increase by 1.75%.

Students/Families:

Busing: Yinghua is hoping to need only one bus for students who live in Minneapolis. The bus will pick up groups of students at "hubs" no more than one half mile from their homes. The ride is expected to last at least one hour. There will not be busing for students outside of Minneapolis. There was insufficient interest in busing for students who live outside of Minneapolis, after information about the costs and the length of time students would spend on the bus was made available.

Mailing: Family information packets will be mailed this week.

Community:

Heidi Miller, a Recreation Supervisor with the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB), has met with Ms. Lueth regarding use of the Yinghua Academy gym. She has requested access to the gym Monday through Friday from 6-9:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Programming includes girls' volleyball and boys' wrestling. The Board discussed the NE Wrestling program. The coach for the program is Shawn Wakuruk, and he enlists the support of two or three assistant coaches and numerous parent volunteers. The Board agreed that the school wants to be a good neighbor, but also has boundaries regarding the use of space by outside groups.

Ms. Lueth will further explore the safety precautions, such as a sign-in procedure and a set ratio of students to adults, which may be in place for MPRB programs. She also will speak with Mr. Yang about the MPRB proposal. CSDC will have to negotiate the terms of an agreement with MPRB.

V UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS

Events Coordinator: The Board is considering combining the Marketing Chair position with the Events Coordinator position.

Facilities/Move: Ms. Choy reported that many volunteer hours have been logged, though it also has been a challenge to connect with parent volunteers. New issues continue to emerge such as a concern with the color of the water. Currently all drinking fountains have been taped off and bottled water is provided. On August 16 and/or 23 many volunteers are needed to assemble furniture.

V UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS (cont.)

Financials:

Mr. Parish gave the board the current financial reports and the June electronic funds transfer report. There was more activity than usual this month due to year end payouts. Most, though not all, of the Yinghua Care outstanding balance issues have been resolved.

Ms. Moeller will arrange for Beltz, Kes, Darling and Associates to do financial training with the board on August 31.

Fundraising: \$41,000 has been raised in the Capital Campaign. Mr. Parish and Ms. Pribbenow will be sending letters to new incoming parents. Receipts also will be sent. A Fundraising Committee volunteer Paul DeGeest established a Facebook page for Yinghua Academy. The page includes a call for volunteers. There is strong feeling on the board that we should not post a request for volunteers on such a public site. The board discussed the importance of making sure that our web presence is well thought-out and connected to our overall image planning. Ms. Moeller will follow up and ensure that the Facebook page is taken down. In the months to come the Marketing Committee will determine whether or not to incorporate a Facebook page as part of Yinghua's marketing strategy.

Marketing: No report at this meeting.

Teacher Welcoming Strategy:

Ms. Choy needs teacher addresses in order to disseminate information. She will work with Rebecca Kreitzer to send out information

The school is looking for furnished rental space for two Chinese teachers from September 1 onwards. From August 15 through September 1, the teachers will stay with Ms. Lueth. Ms. Moeller noted that she knows someone in St. Anthony Park who is going to China for a year and renting out their house. Ms. Moeller will follow up and see if this might be an option for these teachers.

Technology Committee:

Ms. Lueth reported that new staff member Dave Waldoch and Ms. Kreitzer are working on a new website. Parent Yulin Yin is helping and has recommended that the school use Drupal, an open source Content Management System that allows anyone to build fairly complicated dynamic website applications. The board must approve the new website before it is launched. Ms. Moeller suggested that a special board meeting be called, if needed, to approve the website in a timely manner. Ms. Lueth will investigate any costs involved in using Drupal.

Ms. Lueth will ask Mr. Waldoch to look into blocking a Facebook page which someone unknown to the school has posted and which includes some negative comments about Yinghua Academy.

YACA (Yinghua Academy Community Association):

YACA events for the summer are the Swimming Outing at Lupient Summer Park and the Back-To-School picnic. Gently used uniforms will be collected prior to the picnic. YACA is planning to offer first Friday of the month coffee dates for parents. A special reception is being planned for parents of kindergarteners on the first day of school—"Kleenex and Coffee".

VI NEW BUSINESS

1 Charter School Law: Ms. Moeller reported on her conversation with Beth Topuluk, Executive Director of Friends of Education (FOE), Yinghua Academy's authorizer. The two discussed the implications of the Minnesota Charter Schools 2009 legislative changes.

- Per II E, FOE is preparing model bylaws. These should be ready by the end of July. Though the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has not yet approved trainers, Yinghua will proceed with the training it has organized for school board members on August 31, 2009.
- Per II F, Yinghua will need to change its election procedures so that voting is completed before the close of the school year.
- Per III D, the school's lottery procedures must be listed on the website, lottery information must be distributed during open houses and mailed to prospective families. Ms. Moeller will add this to her column in the July e-newsletter.
- Per III H, the board needs to establish qualifications for employees, and it must implement a professional development plan for board members, and these plans and their implementation must be recorded in the school's 2010 Annual Report.
- Yinghua will need to keep track of the details regarding item IV B i, renovation/purchase of existing facility.
- Regarding IV D, the school may need to disseminate information to target groups.
- Ms. Choy asked if staff may be included under the enrollment preferences. Ms. Moeller had learned from Ms. Topuluk that, under the law, the preference applies only to the children of teachers who teach at Yinghua Academy.
- Ms. Moeller confirmed that the school prepares an Annual Report, which is due October 1 each year to the Minnesota Department of Education. Yinghua posts its Annual Report on the school's website.

2 Board Roles:

- Move Coordinator—Ms. Choy
- Teacher Welcoming Committee Chair—Ms. Choy
- HR Committee—Ms. Moeller (chair), Ms. Lien, Ms. Norell
- Liaison to YACA—Ms. Mueller; YACA is discussing whether to appoint a liaison to our board.
- Treasurer—Mr. Parish
- Secretary—Ms. Pribbenow
- Fundraising Committee—Mr. Parish (co-chair), Ms. Pribbenow (co-chair)
- Facilities Committee—Mr. Yang (chair), Ms. Choy

Also, in order to provide a connection between the people working on technology at the school (an informal committee) and the Yinghua Board, Ms. Lueth will provide updates at the board meetings regarding technology efforts at the school.

A motion was made and seconded to invite Janine Trutna and Scott Jax to join the Board. The motion carried.

Ms. Moeller will contact Janine Trutna and Scott Jax to invite them to join the board. Term limits for these two new Board positions have not been determined.

3 Marketing Committee/Event Coordinator: The question of whether to combine the Marketing Committee Chair and Event Coordinator roles was tabled.

VI NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

4 Scheduling: The board reviewed board meeting dates through February, open house dates, and the open enrollment dates. The board meeting time was changed from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. to 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., beginning with the August 10 meeting. All meetings will be held at Yinghua Academy.

Meetings of the Yinghua Academy School Board

Monday, August 10
Monday, August 31
Monday, September 21
Monday, October 5
Monday, October 26
Monday, November 16
Monday, December 14
Monday, January 11
Monday, February 1
Monday, February 22

Open Houses – All are planned for 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 21, 2009
Saturday, December 5, 2009
Saturday, January 9, 2010
Saturday, January 23, 2010
Saturday, February 6, 2010

Open Enrollment and Lottery

Monday, January 4, 2010 – Tuesday, February 9, 2010, 5:00 p.m. Open Enrollment Period
Thursday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.—Lottery

5 Proposed Pre-Tax Spending Plans: Ms. Lueth proposed that the school offer employees a pre-tax spending plan as presented in a report to Yinghua by Alliance Benefit Group Services. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made and seconded to add the Pre-Tax Spending Plan as an employee benefit per the terms outlined in the proposal from Alliance Benefit Group Services as of September 1, 2009. The motion carried.

6 Board Retreat: Tabled until next meeting

7 MACS: Ms. Lueth proposed that Yinghua Academy join MACS. Discussion ensued.

A motion was made and seconded for the school to become a member of MACS at an annual fee of up to \$6,000. The motion carried.

8 UCBC: Ms. Pribbenow will attend the August 5 UCBC meeting. She will try to find someone from the Yinghua community who might have business interests linking them to UCBC to attend future meetings as a Yinghua representative.

9 St. Paul Prep Academy: Ms. Moeller attended an open house at St. Paul Prep Academy, a private international school. The school has a sister campus in Beijing. They are looking for host families for students.

VII ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.