

**Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes**  
September 21, 2009

**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

**Board Members Not in Attendance**

Naomi Mueller

**Director in Attendance**

Betsy Lueth

**YACA Representative in Attendance (Ex Officio, Non-Voting)**

Ruth Straub

**Public in Attendance**

None

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Moeller called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. APPROVALS

A. Agenda: The following changes were made to the Agenda: delete the October 11 Board Retreat date; add, under Approvals, vote to approve a YACA liaison. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the Agenda with changes.

B. 08/31/09 Board Meeting Minutes: Several changes were made to the minutes from the last board meeting. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the minutes with changes.

C. YACA liaison: A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve Ruth Straub as liaison from the YACA Board to the School Board.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

#### IV. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

##### A. Enrollment/Students

Enrollment is 298.

K-75 (24 on the waiting list)

1<sup>st</sup> -74 (14 waiting)

2<sup>nd</sup> - 50 (3 waiting)

3<sup>rd</sup> -45 (5 openings)

4<sup>th</sup> -21 (4 openings)

5<sup>th</sup> -22 (3 openings)

6<sup>th</sup> 11 (14 openings)

##### B. Curriculum

1. Ms. Lueth reported that she and the academic staff are preparing for the October 8 Curriculum Night (6-8:30 p.m.)
2. The StarTalk reviewers gave Yinghua outstanding reviews for its summer math camp.
3. All schedules and year-long curriculum maps have been finalized.
4. The Gifted and Talented policy has been reviewed, and qualifying students have been identified. Gifted support will begin in October.
5. Ms. Lueth previewed the TRIO software which is available to members of Charter Schools Partners. On first view, the product looks flexible and good for supporting a data-driven approach to curriculum and instruction.
6. Yinghua staff will present curriculum and instructional materials in Chicago at the StarTalk meeting and in November at ACTF (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).
7. The Minnesota Department of Education invited Yinghua to be a school site during the Central States Foreign Language convention this fall.

##### C. Facilities

1. Additional boiler repairs, totaling approximately \$1,500, are needed to replace the compressor and bearings in the air handler.
2. All construction is complete with the exception of the front door and minor roof repairs. The front door will be complete by Thursday, this week; and roof repairs will be completed within the next two weeks.

3. Daily student dismissal continues to be a challenge for all. Staff is reviewing methods and processes and is designing a new dismissal routine.

D. Financial/Grant

1. Yinghua Academy received a Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) grant from the Federal Government in the amount of \$811,265 to be disbursed during a three year period. Ms. Lueth circulated a handout summarizing the grant's objectives, outcomes, staffing and financial information.
2. Budget revisions will be completed before the October 5 board meeting. Ms. Lueth is evaluating how the new grant monies will blend with general education funding.
3. Funding of staff positions is the most significant portion of Yinghua's budget. Ms. Lueth distributed an organizational chart. She hopes to be able to add another administrator this year to support students, families and community relationships.
4. The draft audit report was received and reviewed. A finding regarding the timeliness of deposits was noted. Making one deposit per week is acceptable, and the school had been making deposits less frequently than weekly.
5. All federal SERVS applications have been filed and are under review at the Minnesota Department of Education.

E. Reporting

1. MARSS reporting is complete and accurate.
2. Transportation reporting is complete and accurate.

F. Staffing

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and one kindergarten teacher are still overseas. Both teachers will be ready to take over their duties on October 1.
2. The music teacher resigned. Her last day will be this Friday. The school is interviewing long-term substitutes who may be English speaking. The eventual goal is to hire another Chinese-speaking music teacher.

G. Students/Families

1. Ms. Lueth reported that "Back to School Night" was successful. Ms. Pribbenow commented that the sound system was not sufficient to carry Ms. Lueth's voice in the gym; parents in the back of the room reported not being

able to hear anything. Several board members suggested relocating the sign-up tables from the rear of the presentation room to another location. Also Ms. Lueth will consider various alternatives for next year so that all attendees will be able to hear well.

2. Ms. Lueth plans to recognize and thank the volunteers who helped with the move this summer.
3. Ms. Lueth and Ms. Trutna are working on marketing strategies to attract students in the upper grades.

#### V. UPDATES/OLD BUSINESS

- A. Facilities and Minneapolis Parks and Recreation. Mr. Yang reported that the Parks board has not replied to the Reciprocal Use Agreement Yinghua sent. There currently is no restriction on the school's use of the fields.
- B. Financial. Mr. Parish distributed two handouts. The school's line of credit is scheduled for renewal on October 15. The board reviewed the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) report. Mr. Jax asked if there is a place where all of the school's policies are kept. The board discussed the process for reviewing policies. Ms. Moeller and Ms. Lueth will work on this.
- C. Fundraising. Mr. Parish reported that \$50,000 has been raised in gifts and pledges in the capital campaign. \$25,000 has been collected. The revised budgeted goal for fund raising this year is \$60,000. Ms. Pribbenow reported that a new set of letters will go out to returning parents who have not made a capital campaign gift. Members of the fundraising committee attended the US China Business Connections breakfast in September. The fundraising committee met with YACA representatives to discuss timing of various solicitations. The fundraising committee is beginning to plan an event for Spring 2010. The board discussed the need to revisit the idea of creating a Yinghua Foundation for fundraising and for publishing. Mr. Yang reported that the application for a 501(c)3 for YBC has not moved forward.
- D. HR Committee. The committee has not met, given the earlier decision not to meet until after the first few weeks of school. Ms. Moeller will set up a meeting with the HR Committee members, i.e., Luyi Lien, Keri Norell, and Doug Parish.
- E. Marketing. Ms. Trutna distributed a handout outlining the committee's current, recent past and upcoming projects. The committee is focusing on attracting late entry, upper grade students. The board discussed the use of texting and other online mechanisms for reaching upper grade students.
- F. Teacher Welcoming Strategy. Ms. Choy reported that one teacher is looking for a car to buy. Ms. Choy is working with parents to find holiday opportunities for teaching staff.

- G. Technology Committee. No report.
- H. YACA. Ms. Straub reported that YACA's next major event is the Kite Festival on October 26. On October 2 YACA will host its second "First Fridays" coffee at Urban Harvest. There is an all-member meeting planned for October 22. The Blue Sky Guides will be sent home October 2.
- I. Charter School Law Changes and Yinghua By-Laws Update. Nothing to report.
- J. Possible Topics for Our Board Retreat
  - 1. Future Financial Challenges -- especially uncertainty of state funding; also role of fundraising
  - 2. Growth Rate of Yinghua Academy -- what should we plan for?
  - 3. Expanding Our Facility
  - 4. Is the Decline in Chinese Adoptions a Concern?
  - 5. Sustaining Parent Involvement
  - 6. Media Strategy
  - 7. Impact of Last Year's Charter School Legislation
  - 8. Transportation
  - 9. Biggest Challenges facing Yinghua over the next 2 years
  - 10. How to Approach the "Growing Pains" of Yinghua and manage the stress of so much change
  - 11. Revisiting Our Mission Statement
  - 12. Understanding and Planning for the Challenges of the Next 3-4 Years
- K. Special Education Advisory Board. Ms. Li reported that the first meeting of this new committee will be chaired by a representative from Innovative Special Education Services (ISES), with which Yinghua contracts for a Special Education Director. Parents who have a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) are invited to attend the meeting. Staff will not be present. The school has approximately 30 students with an IEP.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Charter School Partners (CSP)
 

Ms. Lueth was required by CSP to sign CSP's Quality Contract in order to attend a class this morning on CSP's database products. The contract stipulates that CSP may use Yinghua Academy's name in its marketing materials. Ms. Moeller has clarified with the executive director of CSP that Yinghua may choose to participate in the other programs that CSP offers, but that there is no requirement of participation. The cost of membership in CSP for this year is \$1000, \$500 of which is being paid by Yinghua's authorizer, Friends of Education. The Yinghua Academy affirmed its decision on August 31 to join CSP for the 2009-2010 school year.
- B. Reduced rates for Yinghua Care based on hardship. The board discussed a recent request for reduced Yinghua Care rates. Ms. Moeller asked if a staff member could

research the policies of other schools regarding reduced rates for after school programs. The board would like to establish a policy on this and will review what other schools are doing at the next meeting.

- C. Board Training. Ms. Moeller offered the idea of the board bringing in a consultant to conduct training for the board on the roles and responsibilities. During this discussion Mr. Jax proposed the formation of a Policy Committee to review and, as necessary, update all school policies, including those required by law as well as other policies that the Yinghua Academy Board has approved over the last several years. Mr. Jax and Ms. Moeller will work on the creation of this committee and on having some training for the board in conjunction with that.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.