

**Yinghua Academy Board Meeting Minutes**  
Yinghua Academy Library, 1616 Buchanan Street NE, Minneapolis  
Monday, October 25, 6:00 PM  
final

**Board Members in Attendance**

Maryann Choy (Secretary), Taoyuan Li, Luyi Lien, Cindy Moeller, Keri Norell, , Abigail Pribbenow (Chair), Jen Shadowens, Kristin Swenson

**Board Members Not in Attendance**

Doug Parish (Treasurer), Scott Jax

**Director in Attendance**

Betsy Lueth

**Charter School Authorizer in Attendance**

Beth Topoluk

**YACA Liaison**

Ruth Straub

**Public in Attendance**

Several members of the public attended the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Pribbenow called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

II. AGENDA APPROVAL

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to approve the proposed agenda with a change was seconded and passed.**

III. FRIENDS OF EDUCATION (FOE)

Beth Topoluk, Executive Director of FOE presented information on renewing Yinghua's contract, strategic planning considerations and FOE's academic improvement initiative.

A. Contract Renewal

Yinghua Academy's contract is up for renewal on June 30, 2011. A draft of Yinghua's evaluation was reviewed, highlighting Yinghua's favorable MCA scores against a comparison school (Park Spanish immersion), comparison district and MN State. This evaluation should be finalized by February 2011. Yinghua will need to work on contract goals for the next contract term.

Ms. Topoluk provided a blank copy of FOE charter school contract. Changes were made to accommodate the new charter school law and where, schools have asked for further clarification. Review the exhibits closely, as the exhibits have changed. Also, new this year, is the evaluation rubrics. The rubrics defines how a FOE charter school will be graded. These rubrics are still in development; FOE encourages comments before year end. Because academic and fiscal data becomes available at different times of the year, FOE may delay releasing results until data catches up and correlates with the same school year.

B. Strategic Planning

Ms. Topoluk offered a few considerations regarding Strategic Planning.

1. Focus on retention of quality teachers by increasing class size incrementally. For example, adding 3 students in a class with a great teacher does not diminish this teacher's effectiveness. The added funding from the additional students can go towards the teacher's salary.
2. Plan enrollment to fulfill the organization's mission. Identify desired class size at the top grade and allow for attrition. Consider no more than two entry points for new students, for example at K-1st and /or 6th grade. This may work better in an immersion setting, given the drain on resources when new students are added at all grade levels. Charter schools are only required to fill available seats. High-performing charter schools in the country limit entry points.
3. View Middle School as a preparation for high school and not just a continuation of elementary school or an "elementary school on steroids". As an example, Ms. Topoluk reviewed NOVA's Math results with maintaining proficiency through the middle school grades, contrary to the State's proficiency where proficiency drops for middle school.

C. Academic Improvement Initiative

1. Similar to the last August workshop on data driven instruction model, FOE will be conducting an August 2011 workshop on how to develop assessments that are tied to state standards. NWEA maps do not align with State standards and testing. Assessments need to be done to determine what is being learned, is progressing a student towards State standards.
2. Once we complete and submit our self-examination (which takes minimally 2 weeks to do), FOE will schedule a team for a 3-day on-site evaluation. Our team will be led by Brian Bloomfield, Executive Director of NOVA. They will provide confirmation and ways to improve our school.

Ms. Topoluk finished her report at 7:10 PM.

IV. BOARD APPROVALS

A. Minutes from Regular Meeting of the School Board, October 4, 2010

**The MOTION by Ms. Shadowens to approve the October 4, 2010 minutes with corrections was seconded and passed.**

B. News/Events Communication Guidelines

**The MOTION by Ms. Choy to approve the News/Events Communication Guidelines was seconded and passed.**

C. Resolution on Committees

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was deferred to the next Board meeting.

D. Resolution on Liaisons

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was deferred to the next Board meeting.

E. Facilities - Funding for Architect's Feasibility Study

Ms. Lueth requested approval for an additional \$2,000 for architect fees related to a facility expansion feasibility study. The study includes re-surveying the property to calculate FAR

(floor area ratio) in order to identify maximum building allowance and to consider additional permit scenarios. Also included, is architect expense to present facility options to the Board on November 11 meeting.

Ms. Lueth also reported that from their meeting with the City of Minneapolis, Yinghua is able to get an interim permit (5 year term) for temporary portable classrooms.

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to approve an additional \$2,000 funding for architect fees was seconded and passed.**

V. WEBSITE DEMONSTRATION

Ms. Shadowens demonstrated Yinghua's new website. Many new features are available such as, links for current and prospective families, volunteers, a master calendar, lunch menus and report an absence.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS FROM LAST MEETING

Due to time constraints, the following agenda items were deferred to the next Board meeting.

- A. Progress report on safety
- B. Enrollment Data Over Time
- C. Strategic Planning

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Moeller asked Ms. Lueth to describe Yinghua's credit card use and internal controls in light of the recent news report of a private school, which experienced credit card fraud. Ms. Lueth stated she approves all purchases prior to using the school's credit card via a purchase requisition form.

Ms. Norell asked if the STARS reporting had been fixed. Currently, the reports incorrectly report 0% for highly qualified staff. Ms. Lueth will look into how this is being coded. MDE gives a lower score for 0% of highly qualified teachers.

VIII. SCHOOL BOARD REPORTS

A. Teams/Committees

1. Personnel – Following MN's open meeting law, Ms. Pribbenow asked the respective individual(s) if they wanted an open meeting on the following three items:
  - a. Ms. Lueth declined an open meeting for a complaint from an employee.
  - b. Ms. Lueth declined an open meeting for review of the Executive Director's PIP.
  - c. Ms. Lueth and Dr. Lien declined an open meeting for a complaint from a former employee.

Ms. Pribbenow said that a summary would be offered for item 1b when the meeting reopened. She estimated that the meeting would reopen in approximately twenty minutes and asked the public to adjourn until notified of the reopening of the meeting. Ms. Lueth was invited to attend the closed meeting. The meeting was closed at 8:03 p.m. Per the requirements of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the closed meeting was recorded.

At 9:22 PM, the Board Chair re-opened the meeting and invited the public to return. Ms. Lueth departed, saying the Board did not need her for the remaining items on the agenda.

Ms. Pribbenow summarized the employee review portion of the closed meeting as follows. The results of board interviews with seven employees were reviewed. Ms. Lueth shared a middle school benchmark plan. Middle school enrollment goals were discussed. The board asked about standing meetings with staff. No board conclusions were made.

2. YACA. Ms. Straub reported. The Kite Festival was well attended with nearly 200 participants. A few days later, Ms. Pribbenow gave the school's State of Address at the YACA general meeting and Tara Fortune presented an excellent report on immersion learning. Dr. Fortune will share her PowerPoint presentation. Mostly because these events were scheduled close together, the general meeting was not well attended, a lesson learned for next time. The Chinook book sale is netting more than \$3000 in profit.
3. Academic. Dr. Lien said, November 2nd is the next meeting. The team is looking for sites of best practices. Ms. Moeller reported information on Intel Schools of Distinction and the team is researching how these schools receive this honor.
4. Facilities. Included in the Executive Director's report, above.
5. Organizational Effectiveness. Ms. Choy drafted data collections sheets and Ms. Lueth shared these with the staff at an administrative & office staff meeting last Thursday. The office staff agreed for all staff to test the data collection worksheets next week, as each position varies greatly. A two-week data collection period will be scheduled to collect 3-5 days of data.

#### B. Chair

1. Regular Meetings of the School Board for January - July 2011

Ms. Pribbenow distributed a revised schedule of Board meetings. Request to change February 21 and March 14 to a different day of the week to avoid the holiday and make allowances for teacher-conferences. Ms. Pribbenow will select a June Thursday and make these other date changes.

A sign-up sheet for Open House was routed during the meeting. Board members were asked to attend at least two Open Houses.

2. Filling Board Member Seat  
At the next board meeting Ms. Pribbenow and Dr. Lien hope to present information to the Board about Professor Pangyen (Ben) Wang who, as a community member, has been proposed as a candidate to fill the open Board seat.
3. 501 c 3 for Y.A. Foundation  
Ms. Pribbenow continues to work with Ms. DeGeest on getting a 501 c3 status for Yinghua Academy Foundation. They asked Ms. Calcaterra to help given her grant writing expertise. A letter will be sent to all school and YACA Board members, asking for a nominal donation to share the application expense of \$850 and become founding members.
4. Bylaws Updates  
Given Mr. Jax time commitments on Facilities expansion, Ms. Pribbenow asked for Ms. Mace services to update the school Bylaws as she recommended from her review, eg. eliminating the electronic meeting setting, redefining meeting notice between Board members. This will be reviewed at the December 6th Board meeting.

#### B. Treasurer

September financial statements were distributed. No discussion from the Board.

#### IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public commented.

X. ADJOURN

**The MOTION by Ms. Swenson to adjourn, at 9:42 PM was seconded and passed.**

Minutes drafted by MaryAnn Choy, Board Secretary

Approved by vote of Board on: November 11, 2010