



# INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OF TRENTON

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## *ICST Board of Trustees MINUTES for December 2, 2020*

*Opening of meeting, 5:15 pm. Trustees participating via online video (on Google Meet) pursuant to the Governor's Emergency declaration on COVID-19 and ICST Bylaws were Bob Kull (BK, presiding), Rachael Binz (RB) and Kim Sdeo (KS). Also present were Melissa Benford (MB, chief school administrator), Peter Lanzi (Business administrator, PL) and David Bosted (DB). Call to Order. Flag Salute/Pledge of Allegiance. All provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law of 1976 "Sunshine Law" NJ Public Law 231 had been met in the scheduling of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct regular business of the public charter school.*

*1. Minutes and Public Comment. Review and adoption of minutes for the November 4, 2020 meeting. Motion to approve, m/BK, s/KS, yes, KS, RB, BK, approved. MB reported that members of the public had the opportunity to provide comments in advance but she had received no public comments for the Trustees and no requests to join the meeting.*

*2. Governance, School management, (a) MB reported that ICST continues to operate successfully for the 2020-21 academic year, fully virtual. 100% of the ICST community has a robust device and a reliable internet connection. ICST plans to operate in virtual mode until January 19. (b) PL reported that the annual audit is being prepared. A good fund balance is reflected in the audit. (c) MB has reported on covid infections among the ICST community to the County. There are four groups of ICST students, parents and staff that are quarantining. d) Longtime ICST Trustee Tom Ogren is leaving the Board after 22 years of service. Board members spoke of their appreciation of his invaluable service to education and ICST. Motion to express the Board's appreciation in a Resolution, m/RB, s/KS, yes RB, KS, BK, unanimously approved.*

*3. Financial Report and Review of expenditures, income, budget. (a) Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies report for October. The reports agree and were arrived at independently. m/RB, s/KS, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous approval. The monthly payroll totals for November 2020 @ \$87,630.58, reviewed and approved, m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous. There were no transfers of funds. (b-c) Review & approval of expenditures & resolutions to pay final bill list total for November 2020, \$49,492.05. After discussion of individual items, Motion to approve, m/RB, s/KS, yes RB, KS, BK, unanimous. 4. Grants. MB is preparing an application for funding for a "digital divide" grant for computers under being managed by NJPCSA. The application is due 12/7.*

*5. Report on Staffing, Personnel and Employee Issues. (a) ICST teachers continue to provide quality instruction on a daily basis. There is 100% student participation at ICST. Math instruction is particularly successful. Teaching reading on line to K-4 students is challenging. This is the reverse of what has been reported in a recent study. For improving reading comprehension online, going deeper into fewer books is more effective at ICST than lightly covering many reading books and topics. (b) MB reported on the maternity leave replacement teacher position. MB recommended the hiring of Melissa Roe-Torres to the temporary replacement position at a pro-rated salary of \$55,777, m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, approved.*

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(c) The Board reviewed a letter from teacher Julie Gannon requesting maternity leave as of January 19, requesting formal Board action and written notification of approval of the leave and return September 1. Motion to approve, m/RB, s/KS, yes RB, KS, BK, unanimously approved. d) NJDOE has indicated an inclination to have Statewide testing in Spring 2021. BK questioned whether any useful conclusions could be drawn from testing data gathered in this anomalous situation. MB said that interesting technical challenges would accompany any large-scale testing program, due to COVID, for example scheduling, monitoring and spacing. But she was confident that ICST could handle those challenges better than most schools. The rate of non-participation might be quite high in some districts; that would further limit the conclusions that might be drawn from Statewide testing results.

6. Executive Session (optional, no exec session held).

7. "Under the Gold Dome." The Surge of "Second wave" COVID-19 cases is continuing, and growing, in Trenton and Mercer Co, according the GMPHP. The massive Canadian second wave in November indicates that indoor activities and Canadian Thanksgiving gatherings are fueling their second wave.

8. Report on School Days, Student Achievement, Attendance and Enrollment. (a) MB reported that there are no interruptions to virtual learning at ICST. (b) Attendance has been excellent and student participation is solid. (c) COVID has complicated the registration of students. (d) ICST has a much higher online participation by students than many other urban district schools in our region. (e) There were no HIB incidents during the past month or the past year. ICST has been very successful in preventing HIB. MB will report an annual total score of 52/68 to NJDOE, m/RB, s/KS, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous.

9. Report on Facility. (a) MB reported: no special issues with the facility. (b) MB reported that an emergency drill was conducted in October. Fire and emergency drills adhere to recommendations from the Office of Emergency Management. There are no students in the building to participate in drills, which are also virtual, only a few staff members.

10. School Operations (a) MB alerted the Board that no modifications will made to the health insurance requirements under the new Chapter 44 of State Law until later in 2021. This law inherently cannot be met by most NJ charter schools by the Jan 1, 2021 statutory deadline. The Trustees examined the text of a letter that MB will send to the State, indicated that ICST cannot comply. Motion to approve sending the letter, m/RB, s/KS. Yes RB, KS, BK, approved. (b) The Trustees approved renewal of NJSIG insurance, m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, approved.

11. Old (unfinished) Business. None discussed.

12. Correspondence review, if any. None discussed.

13. Trustee business and announcements. BOT Meetings for the 2020-21 year will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, starting at 5:15 PM. Meeting dates will be 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, 6/2, 7/7, 8/4, 2020. Board President BK expressed best wishes for the Holiday season.

14. Adjourn. M/RB, s/KS, yes, unanimous, 6:10 PM.