



INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OF TRENTON

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ICST Board of Trustees MINUTES for July 7, 2021

Opening of meeting, 5:46 pm. Trustees participating via online video (on Google Meet) pursuant to the Governor's Emergency declaration on COVID-19 and ICST Bylaws were Rachel Binz (RB, presiding), Jason Briggs (JB) and Kim Sdeo (KS). Bob Kull is unable to attend and is excused. Also present were Melissa Benford (MB, chief school administrator), Peter Lanzi (PL, business administrator), April Nixon, and David Bosted. 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. Motion to table the review of minutes of the June 2, 2021 BOT meeting, m/JB, s/KS, yes, JB, KS, RB, approved. MB noted that members of the public had the opportunity to attend electronically or to provide comments in advance. She had received one ESSER III comment from a parent, "God bless the President." MB said that any additional comments will be relayed to the board.

2. Governance, School management, (a) MB reported on a meeting with NJDOE officials on renewal and expansion. ICST will apply to expand by adding a fifth grade in Sept 2022. (b) SOA for CEP. Motion to approve m/KS, s/JB, yes, JB, KS, RB, approved. (c) Covid updates. MB said that she expects the school to open normally in September. The guidance keeps changing. CDC guidance does not necessarily match NJDOE requirements. Masks have a negative effect on instruction. The summer school program has begun. The summer school will be important to get students re-accustomed to in-school learning. The transition to virtual learning was challenging, but in the end mostly successful. The transition back will also be difficult for some students. The return to in-school instruction is desirable but is not automatic or problem-free. (d) MB reported that ICST enrollment is full for September.

(g) Spring Surveys of families and staff were mentioned. Staff surveys were very positive. Parents' survey responses are also very positive. Diagnostic testing by ICST has shown individual and group academic progress at ICST during the Covid period (since March 2020). Assessments at ICST show measurable progress for all students, including some who made remarkable gains in reading.

3. Financial Report and Review of expenditures, income, budget. (a) Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies report for May 2021 were reviewed. The reports agree and were arrived at independently. m/KS, s/JB, yes KS, JB, RB, unanimous approval. It isn't clear whether the covid funds will actually contribute to the financial viability of charter schools and district schools. In theory, yes, but there is uncertainty. Only three NJDOE employees are reviewing the 600+ district and CS plans, so there is a long delay in getting plans approved and receiving funds.

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Payroll. The monthly payroll for June 2021 was reviewed and approved, m/JB, s/KS, yes JB, KS, RB, unanimous.

Transfer of funds. \$4,775.61 from support salaries to Special Education Teachers Salary of \$. (b-c) Review & approval of expenditures & resolution to pay final bill list total for June 2021, \$35,696.48. The expenditures are mostly typical. After discussion of individual items, Motion to approve, m/JB, s/KS, yes JB, KS, RB, unanimous approval.

4. **Grants.** MB said that the CRRSA-ESSR II grant has been submitted. NJDOE finally deemed the CRRSA-ESSR II grant “substantially approved” in an email. Catapult Learning has been issued a purchase order. It would not be financially prudent to spend these funds when the ICST grant proposal had not been approved, even if the result is a delay in the new. A “Safe Return to School Plan” is due to NJDOE, and the ESSER III grant is linked to that submission. However the amount of the allocation of funding to ICST is still not listed. Board Resolution to Approve the 2021-22 Safety Grant. M/KS, s/JB, yes KS, JB, RB, unanimously approved.

5. **Report on Staffing, Personnel and Employee Issues.** (a) MB said that two employees (one teacher and one food service employee) have indicated that they will be retiring at the end of this academic year. Everyone else expects to return in September. (b) MB reported that she is proud of the ICST teachers who provided quality virtual instruction on a daily basis during the covid crisis. Enrollment is now 89 students.

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

7. **"Under the Gold Dome."** No special report. The State Budget was approved on schedule.

8. **Report on School Days, Student Achievement, Attendance and Enrollment.** (a) MB reported that at the end of the school year there was intensified focus on review of what was learned during the academic year. (b) Attendance has been excellent. ICST has an exceptionally high online participation rate. (c.) There were no HIB incidents during the past month or the past year. ICST has good success in preventing HIB. (d) Attendance is consistent at 96%.

9. **Report on Facility.** Lead testing was every five years, but now NJDOE will require lead testing every three years. Overall, lead exposure in children has been reduced 95+% since the Baby Boomers due to unleaded gas, recycling of car batteries, no lead in paint for decades, and other lead-reduction steps.

10. **School Operations** (a) MB indicated that the school meals program continues to operate successfully. (b) Evacuation and fire drills were conducted in June, to meet State requirements. Having split cohorts M-W and T-Th complicates the emergency drills. (c) Annual Field day was successful at Rosedale Park on 6/9.

11. **Old (unfinished) Business.** No additional updates. 12. **No additional Correspondence** was reviewed.

13. Trustee business and announcements. Upcoming BOT meetings rescheduled to 7/29, 2021 will be the annual reorganizational meeting.

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