



# INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OF TRENTON

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## *ICST Board of Trustees MINUTES for May 5, 2021*

*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), Rachel Binz (RB) and Kim Sdeo (KS). Jason Briggs is unable to attend and is excused. Also present were Melissa Benford (MB, chief school administrator), Peter Lanzi (Business administrator, PL), 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. Review and adoption of minutes for the April 14, 2021 meeting. Motion to approve minutes, m/RB, s/KS, yes, RB, KS, BK, approved. MB noted that members of the public had the opportunity to provide comments in advance but she had received no public requests or comments for the Trustees.*

*2. Governance, School management, (a) MB presented the NJ School Insurance Group Indemnity and Trust Agreement. The Insurance protects the Trustees from lawsuits. Motion to approve, m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous approval. (b) Mrs. Nixon reported on the Spring title I meeting and the NJCSA parent outreach program. The meeting was virtual this year. The summer school program was announced to the parents. Contact via social media flourishes with fresh input, brief updates, links, and graphics.*

*(c) MB reported that ICST has expanded its in-school educational program. ICST became a hybrid school on February 8. Now, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade have begun in-person classes. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will start on May 10, with 1<sup>st</sup> grade also opening very soon for in-person classes. There are six students per cohort in-school. Students have the option of attending in person on a M/W or T/Th schedule. Good news: 100% of the ICST community has a robust device and a reliable internet connection. (d) MB reported that the 2021-22 lottery has been conducted and new student enrollment packets have been distributed. K is full!*

*(e) Surveys of families and staff were sent out at the end of April. Staff surveys were very positive. Parents' survey responses are also very positive however we are seeking a higher response rate so the survey will be pushed out again. (f) MB reported on the current State DOE plan to have a Fall student assessment called Smart Start. However it will not be the same as the past Statewide testing. There is no baseline due to two years of not having Statewide standardized testing, so it will not be possible to reliably show learning progress either for individual students or for the classes or schools or school districts as a whole based on the proposed State testing. Diagnostic testing by ICST has shown individual and group academic progress at ICST during the Covid period (since March 2020).*

### **ICST Board of Trustees Minutes, May 5, 2021 (continued)**

*3. Financial Report and Review of expenditures, income, budget. (a) Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies report for March 2021 were reviewed. The reports agree and were arrived at independently. m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous approval.*

**Payroll.** The monthly payroll total for April 2021 @ \$97,436.34 was reviewed and approved, m/RB, s/KS, yes RB, KS, BK, unanimous. There were no transfers of funds. (b-c) Review & approval of expenditures & resolution to pay final bill list total for April 2021, \$33,450.24. The expenditures are typical. After discussion of individual items, Motion to approve, m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous.

4. Grants. MB said that the CRRSA-ESSR grant has been submitted. Summer school operations hinge on timely approval. However NJDOE has not acted on the grant and does not respond to repeated inquiries about the status of its review of the grant. Covid emergency funding increases will be good news, but only if the NJDOE approves the uses of the grant funds. ICST cannot spend the funding until it is authorized. It would not be financially prudent to spend these funds when the ICST grant proposal has not been approved. The County BA has been unable to get the NJDOE grant reviewer to act.

5. Report on Staffing, Personnel and Employee Issues. (a) MB said that invitations to return to work will be distributed in May. (b) MB reported that ICST teachers continue to provide quality virtual instruction on a daily basis. ICST on a typical day has 100% student participation. Enrollment is now 89 students.

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

7. "Under the Gold Dome." The statistic that 15% of the population of Trenton has now been vaccinated for Covid is not reassuring. ICST teachers have mostly been vaccinated.

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. 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) Discussion on extending the Memorial Day weekend by closing the school on 5/27 and 5/28. This will not affect having 180 school days. Motion to approve closing on 5/27 and 5/28 m/RB, s/KS, yes RB, KS, BK, unanimous approval.

9. Report on Facility. MB reported: HEPA air filters and window fans are now in every classroom. Air purification and air changes are seen as ways to reduce exposure to Covid.

10. School Operations (a) MB indicated that the school meals program continues to operate successfully, about 30 meals per day. But NJDOA regulations, reacting to Covid, have become Byzantine when applied to a small school such as ICST. (b) Evacuation and fire drills were conducted 4X in April, to meet State requirements. Having split cohorts M-W and T-Th complicates the emergency drills. (c) Funding may be available to add a fifth grade in 2022-23. MB has discussed this with the CS office at NJDOE.

11. Old (unfinished) Business. None discussed, no additional updates. 12. No additional Correspondence was reviewed.

13. Trustee business and announcements. Upcoming BOT meetings 6/2, 7/7, 8/4, 2021. 14. Adjourn. M/JB, s/KS, yes, unanimous, 5:55 PM.