

MNIC ELA Campus
300 Industrial Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Unapproved Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

4:15 PM

Held at 2507 Fremont Ave. N, Minneapolis, MN (Unity Site)

Membership:, Ali Egaale, Jama Farah, Omar Fiqi, Susan Knittel, Kathy Reamer, Nicole Harris, Tracy McFarland, Mr. White White, Mr. Womack Womack

Ex officio: Kevin Byrne, Chanda Baker (Smith)

Note: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise stated.

- I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair expectations for the meetings and time limits.
Ms. Knittel called the meeting to order at 4:20 PM and gave instructions.

Members Present: Susan Knittel, Ali Egaale, Kathy Reamer; Oliver White, Reggie Womack;
Absent: Jama Farah, Omar Fiqi, Nicole Harris, and Tracy McFarland

Others Present: Kevin Byrne, Amy Libman, Nathaniel Hedke, Jason Morzenti, Janet White, Lisa Cooney, Jon Gross, Stephen Bosacker (Designs for Learning)

Items distributed at the meeting include: Agenda, approved board minutes from December 17, 2009, unapproved board minutes from January 12, 2010, MNIC Financial Balance Sheet and Summary Income Statement as of January 31, 2010, Letter to Michael Szykulski (Delta Airlines) for donation.

- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

3 additions to the agenda all in Other Business: Jon Gross' pay and East High Grant, Rewriting MNIC Mission Statement, Plan a meeting for Strategic Planning

Ms. Reamer moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Egaale seconded. Passed.

- III. REVIEW BOARD MINUTES FROM 2-9-10

Corrected footer to match meeting date,

Mr. White moved to accept the minutes of February 9, 2010 as amended. Mr. Womack seconded. Passed.

- IV. BOARD MEMBER ABSENCE

Discussion about a board member who is unable to attend due to family needs. Ms. Knittel proposed that he take a leave of absence or choose to resign.

Ms. Reamer moved to accept the absence of a board member due to family needs up to 4 months from today's date. Member will give the board notice if he will continue as a board member or resign. Ms. Knittel seconded. Discussion: concern about an even number of board members. **Passed.**

This motion will be detained from being delivered in order to learn if the family situation has changed.

V. FINANCE AND BUDGET

A. Treasurer's Report (Kathy Reamer)

Ms. Reamer explained that the financial reports are always 2 months behind because it takes 15 days to process data to create a report after the end of a month. Ms. Reamer pointed out the Balance Sheet totals for January. The Fund Balance is low due to delays in receiving lease aid payment, lower enrollment and the large holdback. Mr. Byrne explained the difference between Fund 1 (General Fund), Fund 2 (Food) and Fund 4 (Community Education)

Mr. Womack moved to accept the finance and budget report. Mr. White seconded. Passed.

B. CSC Update (Kevin Byrne)

Charter School Capital (CSC) has provided financing for MNIC. Many schools are preparing to get financing from CSC due to the limitations on conventional financing and the large hold back. Mr. Byrne explained how the financing was set up. Any future selling of assets to CSC requires board action.

C. East building update (Kevin Byrne)

A school is interested in subleasing part of the East High facility. This would be valuable for MNIC because of the lowered enrollment at this site. This school's interest in the space is promising. Concern was raised about implications if the MN Supreme Court rules against Governor Pawlenty regarding unallotment with no answer.

D. Fire And Safety Equipment

All the work at Unity House is completed, inspections are complete and OK. The MDE received approval from the Fire Marshal and announced payment starting March 30 for lease aid.

E. Donation acceptance from Michael Szykulski, Delta Airlines

Mr. Szykulski, on behalf of Delta Airlines, donated 80 headphones to MNIC. These are being distributed to the sites as needed.

Ms. Reamer moved to accept the donation of 80 headphones from Mr. Szykulski on behalf of Delta Airlines. Mr. Womack seconded. Passed.

VI. DIPLOMA ISSUES

A. Failure Free Schools (Jason Morzenti)

Mr. Morzenti, with support from Mr. Hedke, encouraged the Board to act to support and pursue certain exemptions that would allow MNIC students to graduate without having to pass the MCA II graduation tests. The goal is to create a learning environment where students are free from fear of failure in which students can advance in their learning unhindered, represented in the phrase "freedom from failure".

A new bill has been posted in the Legislature that would allow alternative and multiple measures to qualify students to graduate.

Interest in forming a committee to study this was expressed. Ms. Reamer is concerned to find a good balance for what is appropriate for students – not too hard, but not too easy. Ms. Reamer would like to do research on this idea. Mr. Morzenti suggested that MNIC build a process so a student cannot fail if that student does what teachers give that one to do. Mr. Morzenti believes that with this freedom to not fail, students can begin to face the work in order to succeed. Concern (Janet White) that students not be set up to not work. Some students don't want to work hard, so gaining an 'easier' way to graduate may become a problem. Currently state law does not release schools to

alternative forms of graduation. Concern was raised that a “permanent lower class” is forming because certain students are not able to get a high school diploma.

Volunteers were taken for the committee.

B. Alternative Certification (Kevin Byrne)

In the Adult Education program, MNIC learned that it is much more difficult for adults (21 or older) to get a high school diploma. 5 agencies contributed to this decision that led to this situation. Today a high school diploma is regulated.

A new concept to help adults who do not earn a high school diploma is to create an alternative certification process that is not called a “high school diploma”. This alternative would demonstrate to employers that holders of this certificate have skills and competencies that are valuable to employers. For a certificate like this to be worth anything other groups and companies would have to support it.

VII. RECRUITMENT (REGGIE WOMACK AND NICOLE HARRIS)

A. Student attendance

Enrollment in January was under 300, but is now 322. 227 in the Circle Sites (subtotal), 105 at East, 48 ABE students. Thanks to those who have helped achieve the goal of over 300. Mr. Womack pointed out that the most important thing is to improve retention. There are many youth not in school that can be recruited. It is far better to keep the ones who join the school. Mr. Womack offered to be on a retention committee. Mr. Morzenti pointed out that many more students will stay in school if they cannot fail.

B. Safety in all buildings (Susan Knittel)

No discussion

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT (KEVIN BYRNE)

A. Graduation update

Bobby Joe Champion will speak at Graduation. It will be held at Washburn High School. Graduation Committee will start meeting soon. Mr. White asked if there are students who will receive scholarships. Mr. Morzenti started a scholarship for MNIC students with 4 basic requirements. He will send information on this to Mr. Byrne.

Ms. Knittel requested that at the graduation there be an interpreter present so all present can understand together. Mr. White needs pictures of all graduating students. Reminder that students cannot walk if they are not qualified to graduate.

B. East Bldg update

See above

C. Prom Update

Students are purchasing prom tickets. The Prom is being held at the Marriot, as last year. Fundraiser is happening at Cub Foods. Some girls have received donated prom dresses. Opportunities for young men to get suits are being sought. \$166 has been raised for Prom from donated ink cartridges program.

D. CoreNet Partnership and West Broadway Development

CoreNet is a national organization of business people. The local chapter has started a project. Catalyst (owner of MNIC’s Unity Site) won the CoreNet RFP. CoreNet would like to support improvements to the Unity site. New book cases will be donated. Construction will be donated. Architects want to come to talk with students at a lunch event. Other improvements may come as well. Some MNIC students and former MNIC student are involved with a project at 1200 Broadway in a new restaurant..

E. Change in Jon Gross's Position

Mr. Byrne reported that the Math improvement grants are prematurely being ended. Mr. Byrne brought Jon Gross in to support the completion of these grants. A Board resolution is needed to activate this change.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. LEGISLATION UPDATE AND CAPITOL DAY (OLIVER WHITE)

Mr. White reported on taking MNIC students to the Charter School Day on the Hill. Students met with Bobby Joe Champion, who encouraged students.

B. Jon Gross' pay and East High School Grant

Forward to the next meeting, after more information is made available.

C. Rewriting Mission Statement

Ms. Knittel requested for reexamination of the MNIC Mission Statement, based on recent conversations. This will be incorporated into the new committee

D. Plan Meeting for Strategic Planning

Proposed to have a meeting Monday April 5, 2010, 3 PM. Anyone interested may come. The meeting will be at UTEC, room to be announced.

Audit documents for FY 2008-2009 were passed out to board members. Discussion with the auditor will be scheduled for the next Board meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be April 12, 2010, 3:00 PM at East High

Mr. White moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Reamer seconded. Passed.

The Meeting adjourned at 5:42 PM

Submitted by Stephen Bosacker, Designs for Learning