

MNIC Sabathani Campus  
310 E. 38<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409

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**Approved Minutes**  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Thursday, March 6, 2008  
4:10 p.m.

Membership: Abdighani Ali, Mary Ander, Abdirahman Egeh, Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia, Rebecca Gutierrez, Vin McMahon, Kassim Mohamed, Janet White, Ron White

Ex officio: Kevin Byrne, Patsy Brooks, Idris Mohamed, Steven Oates, Chanda Smith

Note: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise stated. Items distributed at the meeting include: Agenda, 2006-2007 MNIC Audit reports A and B, Sabathani lease amendment (new rooms).

## I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Ron White called the meeting to order at 4:11 PM at the Sabathani Circle Site classroom, LL9.

Members in attendance: Abdighani Ali, Mary Ander, Rebecca Gutierrez, Vin McMahon, Ron White, Janet White (arrived at 4:30 PM). Absent: Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia, Kassim Mohamed, Abdiraman Egeh.

Ex officio and others in attendance: Executive Director Kevin Byrne, Executive Assistant Patsy Brooks. Others: Jon Gross (Principal for Circle Sites), Amy Libman (Director of Volunteer Programs and Student Support Services), Melissa Kappenman (Food Service Coordinator), Don Link (Work program), Oliver White (Sabathani), Antonio Cardona (PUC Associate Sponsor Liaison), Steve Bosacker (Designs for Learning).

## II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Byrne requested to amend the lease for Sabathani. Time for Antonio Cardona to speak was moved forward to become Item V after Open Microphone.

**Ms. Ander moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Ali seconded. Carried.**

Mrs. White arrived

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 7<sup>th</sup> BOARD MEETING

Footer date is incorrect – Change to correct date, February 7, 2008. Ron White asked people to send changes to Steve and the minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

## IV. OPEN MICROPHONE

- a. Program Update for Sabathani Circle. Mr. Oliver White thanked everyone for coming to the meeting at this location. Sabathani Circle serves 40 students. These students come from troubling circumstances. He recounted, anonymously, some student situations. Significant hard work is required to help these students. Yet the site is doing well and is popular in the community. 10% of female students are pregnant. 90% are affiliated with gangs. These students need an adult, positive male figure in their lives. Most lack this. September – December some young woman students

participated in internships. The young men, associated with gangs could not pass gang territories to attend the internships available to them. As an alternative, staff are seeking internships within the Sabathani building for the young men. Staff are seeking a mentoring arrangement for some students. The Sabathani site is gang-neutral. Students come from S Mpls, N. Mpls, even St. Paul. A parent recently volunteered to help. Mrs. Janet White and the Sabathani Community Center staff inform and support one another. Question: What are parenting skills needs among students? Students bring up their questions and these are teachable moments. Ms. Gutierrez will link a public health person to Mrs. White. Sabathani Community Center will soon provide a community health clinic one day a week in the building.

- b. Report by Amy Libman on Grant received from COMPAS, working with Juxtaposition. This combines city beautification and a training course for youth. Seeking donations for materials. She hopes Shiloh and Unity benefit from this. This might be a new venture for art-based community service.

#### V. PILLSBURY'S UPCOMING SPONSOR REVIEW OF MNIC (KEVIN BYRNE AND ANTONIO CARDENAS)

MNIC's Sponsor, Pillsbury United Communities (PUC), will review the MNIC prior to an expected 3 year renewal of the schools Charter. Antonio explained the Sponsor Review process. They will evaluate the school's progress in relation to the Charter Contract. A small review team will come to the school, ask questions and observe. This year a peer review process will be conducted by other school directors. PUC restructured the Education Unit (sponsoring schools) this last year. They will form a strong group of sponsored schools where directors can learn from one another, share practices and insights. PUC is seeking interns to help do meta-analysis of all PUC schools' data.

This year the review process is expanded to cover 5 categories: Special Education, Suspension and attendance rates, School Finance (health of organization), Board Governance and policies, Background checks for employees

They will look at other facets of school operations: Conflict of interest statements, Academic Performance, School Operations, Community Involvement, and Parent satisfaction.

This process will be as unobtrusive as possible over a 2 day period. Schools should not have to create new documents. One day the reviewers will be in school to interview staff, Director, observe classes, interview parents. The 2nd day they will analyze and organize what they observed.

The Review will be completed by the end of April. Orientation for this process will happen in mid- to late-March. Who will be involved in orientation? The Board's Executive Committee, to keep the group size manageable for 7 schools.

By end of May a new contract should be in place.

PUC is sponsoring 15 schools, to new schools: Continuum Academy, A new middle school, which focuses on brain-based learning in Bloomington or St. Louis Park. Transitioning to sponsor HSRA.

#### A: CONSENT AGENDA

None

#### B: REGULAR AGENDA

##### I. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (KEVIN BYRNE)

1. General progress report

Other reviews are scheduled soon. The MDE will do a review this Month at ELA. A new committee was formed to regularly bring AYP issues and plans to the Board. Current AYP steps at MNIC: ELA is entering Year 5 in Math. Mr. Byrne and a few others have been working with the Metro ECSU oversight group on this. This next year is a significant milestone for the program. The MDE is aware of the significant challenge to help the ELA student population meet Federal NCLB requirements. ELA has the highest Math test results compared to other LEP academies. However none of these academies do well on this test. Sanctions can be severe at this stage, from changing staff to closing the school program. Officials don't want to close down a school, but they expect real improvement. Cathy Jensen (Metro ECSU) is pressing for improvements. Mr. Byrne will bring recommendations for ELA to a meeting tomorrow. ECSU and MDE have clear standards for how a program proves it is seriously working on improvements.

Circle Sites AYP – have some challenges but are making progress. Math scores are improving and math classes will be better. Regarding the Reading test – 75% of UTEC students passed this year. Writing scores are fairly good.

Update from Jon Gross: new standards require Algebra in Grade 8, Algebra 2 in HS. These are imbedded into MCA II. Expectations have been raised.

Workshops are available for staff of AYP schools for free, these provide CEU credits. MNIC will focus on Sheltered Instruction. Money is available for a mid-June set of workshops. Goal is to target math for this summer.

Jon recounted the staff changes at Unity and Shiloh (formerly Jordan). These changes were accepted as an effort to improve the sites' standing in AYP.

ELA staff are incorporating math language and activities into beginning English classes.

ELA Reading skills range from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 6<sup>th</sup> grade levels in one class. Is there any allowance for these population issues? Yes and no. Not regarding AYP – the school must work at improving. And the MDE people fully appreciate the challenge and work with the schools to support improvements within the challenges.

## 2. Student enrollment update

ADMS at 430 now. Graduation dates: May 29 for ELA at ELA for ELA. Circles – June 3 at Shiloh Temple.

## 3. Amend lease

Mr. Byrne presented a lease amendment for Sabathani Site. This allows MNIC to move into different rooms that are rated E-Occupancy. This area has private restrooms, direct entrance from street. No change in rent for this lease this year. This space is next to the Sabathani ABE service rooms. This helps with security.

**Ms. Gutierrez moved to approve the lease amendment. Ms. Ander seconded. Carried.**

## II. FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE (AMY LIBMAN AND MELISSA KAPPENMAN)

Ms. Kappenman (Food Coordinator) reported: Currently cooking all food at ELA, delivering food to all other sites. Working on menu changes. Working with ELA student council to advise for meals. After this will hold a survey. ELA service provides Somali food 1x per week. There is variety. Menu options will be adjusted based on feedback, Fed guidelines and costs. Will give Circle sites a "special day" meal. Site health inspections are due; one this year. Pre-inspection will be done prior to this – seeking to learn what to improve.

Averaging \$15,000-\$20,000/mo income. This is up from \$5,000/mo when Ms. Kappenman came on two years ago.

Division 2 (an alternative method for counting meals served) is being sought for payment monitoring. The program must have a solid base of data and practice before this can be gained. To achieve this they need better records. When achieved, this program will greatly simplify data collection. The staff are working on a more positive and respectful atmosphere during meal times.

Seeking ways to enhance the food program by some combination of better menus, more food and higher \$ from the general fund. They are developing and implementing a food safety plan, standard operating procedures and training.

History of 3-year food program fund: subsidizing from \$150,000 then \$75,000 hope to get to \$50,000 this year. Seeking what are the actual base costs for the program. At that point they will come to the Board with proposals and data to choose what the school will do for the program. Perhaps choose to allow seconds or more expensive food that is more interesting to students. Currently must meet federal guidelines and create efficient processes. Knowing more about student food choices could lead to no-cost improvements

They are developing a committee for health and wellness policy. This policy must cover all aspects of health for all involved in the school.

Suggestion using a la carte items that students purchase. This may be a way to enhance the program without increasing costs. Consider asking students about this. Thank you. The food program team does not have capacity to address this yet.

Comment from Vin – he has been using the food at school to help with students and check out the meal. Rarely did students have a negative comment. The food was acceptable and sometimes good. What is the relationship between pushing for more savings and losing significantly on the quality of the food? Ms. Kappenman stated that to try to save more money would hurt the quality of the meals. Discussion about surveying students. Suggestion that MNIC seek donations for food program.

### III. PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM COMMITTEE: NEW BOARD COMMITTEE (KEVIN BYRNE AND JON GROSS)

Was covered last meeting. This committee will be activated. Ms. Ander left the meeting.

### IV. FINANCE (KEVIN BYRNE)

#### 1. Receipts and disbursements (Susan Airhart)

Cash Flow statement presented. Additional funds from last year's lease aid has helped greatly. Maximum estimated cash need is \$185,286 in June. If the Board keeps spending as it is now and as planned, this projection is realistic. Mrs. Airhart recounted a variety of unexpected income. This gap will be more than covered by hold back next Fall. (Mr. Ali left, lost quorum)

Question about the school's position next August? Hold back would be somewhere between \$400-\$500,000. Mr. Byrne's goal is to build up a cash balance better for next year. Set a goal of how quickly to reach a balanced budget and no cash flow issues. (Mr. Ali returned, quorum restored). There is a possibility of extra income from lease aid could solve this. Are we being conservative enough to prepare for possible reduced income increases for next year? One plan is to staff for existing enrollment and increase staffing as enrollment increases. The Budget framework for next year has been started.

### V. STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES (KEVIN BYRNE AND STEPHEN BOSACKER)

Steve presented the 5 general goals created from the first Visioning Committee Meeting. Discussion about how to complete the strategic plan. One idea is to have a ½ day

workshop with greater number of people involved. The Visioning Committee has been formed and people invited to do this work.

## VI. SPACE UPDATES, CONTRACTS, BIDS AND LEASES

A. No other updates

## VII. NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

1. Audit Committee

Mr. Byrne suggested that Committees of the Board be restructured to focus on the AYP issues the school faces.

2. Staff/Curriculum Development Committee

No discussion

3. Marketing Committee

No discussion

## VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Byrne asked for people to help review proposals for the MNIC Contract RFPs. There will be a meeting to prepare reviewers on how to score the proposals. The final scores are determined for each proposal at the reviewers meeting. Schedule was stated (see website). 9 copies will be submitted for each proposal for all readers.

Transportation and Cleaning contracts will be pursued in a separate process. The RFPs for these will be rewritten according to the new RFP format. Currently the Transportation contract is month to month. For next year Mr. Ron White would like to have a full RFP process for these areas of service.

Staff members are concerned that the copier is not working and the copier company says they are not paid for service. Ms. Brooks and Mrs. Airhart claim all invoices received have been paid. This will be resolved.

The scheduled Board meeting for April is the 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, this conflicts with Spring Break. Therefore the next Board meeting will be rescheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup> at Unity House.

Question was raised about email to staff about driving students on school business. Insurance liabilities are significant should something bad happen. Create a change in employee handbook to cover one implication of this scenario. A policy draft will be presented to the Board regarding not transporting students unless written permission is given. This will also address the risk of illicit staff-student relationships.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

**Ms. Gutierrez Moved to adjourn. Mr. Ron White seconded. Meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM.**

Submitted by Stephen C. Bosacker.