

MNIC ELA Campus
300 Industrial Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Approved Minutes

REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Tuesday, April 12, 2010

3:15 PM

Held at 300 Industrial Blvd., Minneapolis, MN (East High Site)

Membership:, Ali Egaale, Jama Farah, Omar Fiqi, Susan Knittel, Kathy Reamer, Nicole Harris, Tracy McFarland, Oliver White, Reggie 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 3:22 PM and gave instructions.

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

Others Present: Kevin Byrne, Amy Libman, Nathaniel Hedke, Jason Morzenti, Janet White, Lisa Cooney, Jon Gross, Mandy Reamer, Kristin Quinn, Don Link, Dave Haugen, Hannah Johnson, Melissa Kappenman, John Cairns (attorney), Stephen Bosacker (Designs for Learning)

Items distributed at the meeting include: Agenda, Unapproved minutes for March 16, 2010, Statement with conditions for Federal School Improvement Grant by Kevin Byrne. Agenda, unapproved board minutes from March 16, 2009,

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Add Board Election in Other Business

Annual Meeting in May in Other Business

Change in graduation plans in Other Business

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

III. REVIEW BOARD MINUTES FROM 3-16-10

Correction on page 3, subsection 'D'; "restaurant" not "restraint"

Ms. Reamer moved to accept the minutes of March 16, 2010 as amended. Mr. Womack seconded. Passed.

IV. DISCUSSION AND VOTE ON SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN OPTIONS

MDE is preparing for new School Improvement Grants from the DOE for \$34M. This money is for the 34 lowest performing public schools in MN. These schools are on the PLAS list. MNIC is on this list. MNIC has not reached the DOE defined Graduation rate level where 60% of students graduate by age 18. The students who enroll at MNIC start at an average age of 17.5 and are 2 or more years behind in credits. It will be impossible for MNIC students in this situation to meet this graduation requirement. Mr. Byrne reviewed the

process and timing of this change. Mr. Byrne presented testimony to the Senate regarding students in trouble for graduating. Mr. Byrne with other charter school leaders met last Friday with the Commissioner of Education and committee chairs in the House of Representatives. Mr. Byrne prepared a proposal for a 6-year graduation timeline that the Commissioner seemed interested in. For the school to pursue this grant they have four choices (models) for improvement: 1) Close the school, 2) Convert to a charter school, 3) Transform the school or 4) Turnaround. Mr. Byrne advises the school to pursue the Transform model. The current SIG grants are being stopped this summer in order to convert to this new approach. If MNIC goes with this program, then it will be released from current AYP status.

Some schools on the PLAS list are there because of the graduation rule. This is why MNIC is on the list. The money available will mostly pay for a number of services determined by the MDE. MNIC is asking for conditions to address the student enrollment situation and maintain some control of the school. Others may determine what happens with the money. No one really knows what this will mean for the schools when the program is completed. Other schools are seeking special conditions for the program. It is too early to know what the MDE will actually do with this. If the school commits to this program the school will come under Federal rules.

Mr. Byrne presented a document with the terms he proposed to the MDE. He reported that the Commissioner stated she is looking for progress in the measures.

A. MDE Options

B. Input from SIG Groups, Parents, Staff

Ms. Knittel opened the meeting to others to ask questions or make comments. Mr. Cairns contributed to some of the answers. Mr. Byrne read the requirements for schools pursuing the Transformation option. Some are seeking the Transformation option with extended 6 year graduation program.

What if the MDE does not approve the special terms requested? This is not clear yet.

Question about benefit of not being in the program? We believe that the school will not be closed if it does not commit to the program.

The people reviewing the school may bring good insights for MNIC. The source of the money is from US DOE. Can MNIC back out if this is not good for the school? Don't know yet. This is separate money from other funds for school. Q-Comp program will likely become part of this. Comment from Lisa Cooney that the requirements of the program for current grants seem to be not very different from the new SIG requirements.

C. Input from Community Partners

None present

D. Other input

Mr. White moved to accept the Transformation option with the conditions as presented by Kevin Byrne to the Commissioner. Ms. Reamer seconded. Passed.

Mr. Byrne will notify the MDE people with the decision. Conditions are found in the handout Mr. Byrne presented.

V. RECRUITMENT (REGGIE WOMACK AND NICOLE HARRIS)

No report.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Change in graduation plans

Jason Morzenti requested that students with full credits to be able to walk in the graduation ceremony. They would then meet the test requirements later. Clarifying questions: What of students who have not fulfilled sufficient credits in each category (Subject)? Jason is seeking to remove barriers for student advancement. There are state requirements for credits, subjects and tests. A previous approved board motion was to stop students from walking in graduation ceremony when they have not fulfilled the graduation requirements. This was because when students walk, they think they have fulfilled graduation, even though they did not fulfill all requirements. Suggestion for other graduation ceremonies. Mr. Byrne likes creating alternative options for measuring and rewarding student successes. He suggests creating other informal ceremonies to honor student growth.

Discussion about students who have demonstrated competency (aside from tests) could be able to earn alternative certifications. Members expressed concern that students who do walk still come back to finish what they must finish. Mr. White affirmed Jason's advocacy for students and would encourage certain exceptional students. Others counter that so many students who walked did not complete what was still lacking. Don commented that there are some options that have been used to help certain students, as with test anxiety.

Mr. Womack moved to deny students walking in graduation if they have not fulfilled graduation requirements. Ms. Reamer seconded. Discussion: Is it allowable to make exceptions, as with the 504? 504s are legally allowed. The only legitimate way for students to walk who have not completed all requirements is if they have qualified for 504. This works for testing only, not for missing credits. Motion was dropped as this motion duplicates existing MNIC policy

B. Board Election & Annual Meeting

Ms. Reamer, Ms. Knittel and Mr. Womack's seats are open for election this Spring. Mr. Bosacker reviewed requirements for holding an election. Two seats are for teachers, one for at-large. Mr. White will chair the election committee. Mr. Byrne recounted that the annual meeting is where the election happens. May 20th is proposed for the meeting and election. Unity at 3:45 PM. Mr. White will meet with committee to process candidates. The candidates slate will be delivered to Mr. Bosacker by May 7th and notice will be made to parents and staff regarding all candidates and procedures for the election. All who are running for a seat will make presentations at the Annual meeting.

Consensus on the Annual Meeting and election is to be held May 20th 3:45 PM at Unity

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting will be May 20, 2010, 3:45 PM at Unity

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

The Meeting adjourned at 4:45 PM

Submitted by Stephen Bosacker, Designs for Learning