

MNIC Unity Campus
2507 Fremont Ave. N.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55411

Unapproved Minutes
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thursday, May 1, 2008
4:00 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, Idiris Mohamed, Steven Oates, Chanda Smith

Note: All votes were unanimous unless otherwise stated. Items distributed at the meeting include: Agenda; Unapproved minutes for February 7 and March 6, 2008; Draft policy and procedures on notification to staff of violent behavior by students; Proposed contract for services from Designs for Learning; Draft memorandum of understanding between Sabathani Community Center and MNIC; Consolidated Financial Statement ending June 2007; Financial statements for MNIC as of February 29, 2008; MNIC student data report (ADM); Draft MNIC Calendar 2008-2009; Draft policy on Staff-Student Relations; MNIC Board election nomination form and blank ballot form.

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Ron White called the meeting to order at 4:15 PM at the Unity House Site.

Members in attendance: Mary Ander, Abdirahman Egeh, Vin McMahon, Janet White, Ron White. Absent: Abdighani Ali, Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia, Rebecca Gutierrez, Kassim Mohamed.

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 Services Coordinator), Kathy Reamer (teacher Unity), Oliver White (Sabathani), Pamela Meade and Claudine Knoblauch (Designs for Learning).

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Move V(2) Unity Program Update to IV (1). Move VIII Food Service Report to IV (2). Add Governance Issues to V(2). Add Grant Update to V(3)

Ms. Ander moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mrs. White seconded. Carried.

Ms. Ander moved to change the agenda to move "Contracts" and "Sabathani Discussion" up on the agenda to after Open Mike. Mr. McMahon seconded the motion. Carried.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 7th AND MARCH 6th BOARD MEETING

Mr. McMahon moved to withdraw the February 7 Board Minutes (unapproved) and to approve the March 6 unapproved Board meeting minutes. Ms. Ander seconded. Carried.

Discussion Mr. McMahon requested in the February 7 Board minutes the removal of the paragraph starting with “Ms. Gutierrez expressed concern that...” He also added that staff are not staff when serving on the MNIC Board, but are elected officials.

IV. PROGRAM UPDATE:

1. Unity Program update (Kathy Reamer)

Kathy Reamer reported that the Prom fundraiser is going well. University of St. Katherine donated Ballroom space for the prom. Students are developing ownership in these events and the school, preparing the Prom with no money from MNIC.

Some are bagging groceries for fundraiser: \$700 at Cub Food over two fundraisers. \$1500 raised so far. There is a Burger King family night – where 15% of the proceeds go to MNIC (Prom). Ms. Ander and Mr. Ron White can assist with purchasing Burger King fund raising cards. MNIC students earn \$5 per card, cost to purchase is \$10.

Any extra money can be used for seed money for next year’s event. 15 of 60 prom tickets are purchased.

The Family Night event went well. There were many parents there and there are lots of community members that are interested in MNIC.

“Mega graduates” 27-30 from Unity alone – 47 from the North Side

‘Power of You’ applications were submitted for several students.

Unity students competed at a State Level Junior Achievement virtual business competition on April 8. After loosing in the first round, the students learned how the competition worked. They won the next 4 rounds, competing against more experienced teams from other schools.

2. SOUTH FOOD SURVEYS (MELISSA KAPPENMAN)

Survey was given to Circle Sites/South Sites students who attend MNIC between 2 and 3 years. Also a survey was given to the ELA students. Results are not yet back for the Circle/South Sites.

Breakfast: 50% want no cereal, 50% like cereal.

Generally ELA students want more ethnic foods.

Lunch: Students like Rice, chicken sandwich, Chicken breast

Lowest scores were given for ethnic food. Complaints were that the food was not made correctly by the non-African cooks. Half wanted to continue with rice, half want no rice. They want more Pizza. Some other issues were brought up – students thinking that the results won’t matter. There may have been misunderstanding of questions in the survey due to language gaps.

Ms. Libman– Student Council was very helpful in getting the survey done and providing more feedback on the process of the meal service (for example the student council wanted more staff in there to keep the discipline in check). Student council felt it was positive.

Fundraisers – Somabasa or tea to raise money for camping trips

Summer School – considering options

Egeh – what we are doing is good. We do not have to give special rights to the Somali students but it is good to offer services.

Mr. McMahon - Food isn’t too bad. Cut above. If we are going to lose money on food, let’s lose lots of money on it if it means to give better food.

Ms. Libman will bring to the Board some proposals for food service.

Mr. Byrne: There are some schools who have approved better food. It could make a difference in getting and retaining students.

Ms. Kappenman is pursuing commodity pricing for chicken breasts and ground turkey. She is also working on a better "hold and delivery process".

3. Alerting Teachers About Potentially Violent Students - SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE (CLAUDINE KNOBLAUCH)

Ms. Knoblauch (MNIC Special Education Director) presented a draft policy and procedures to the Board regarding alerting teachers to potentially violent students. According to statute, a bargaining unit must approve this. Lacking one at MNIC, this is being presented to the Board. There were 5 to 6 policies from other Districts and MSBA that were studied, combined and used to develop this one for the Board to review.

Policy: "It is the District's intent to follow the law on notifying staff of violent behaviors in students." Ms. Knoblauch recommends that the school address this issue primarily through procedures, allowing for a less detailed policy.

Comments: History: Remember that you should only look about a year back in a student's history. Incidents: Lists examples of them in handout. Legitimate Educational Interest: Who really needs to know about this for legitimate educational purposes, not gossip. Staff Notification: Not to make them afraid, but to help them understand "How can I work better with this student?" Notification Process: Bring the group who needs to know together and talk about it all together. Notification Forms: Part of the 'cum' file and it must travel with the student. Parental notification: Notify parents that teachers are notified if students are under 18. Training needs: Needs to be done to support staff to help students get past their issues. There is CPI training in August for staff for crisis de-escalation. John: Question: If the student is over 18, do we need student's permission to contact mom? Ms. Knoblauch answered, yes.

Mr. Byrne: MSBA put out a policy in 2003 that was too broad and it will now be revised for MNIC. We will enforce the law, but want our policy to be reflective of the best way to handle the process as it is relevant to our school and to charter schools.

V. OPEN MICROPHONE

1. Unity Study Center Program (Takara Spaulding) Absent
2. Governance Issues

Mr. McMahon: Where do we talk about governance on a consistent basis, as a permanent part of the agenda? Response: Board members are not acting inappropriately at the meetings and the administration is doing things well. Mr. McMahon does not want to serve on a board that is in conflict. Would like to be able to address governance issues.

Mr. Byrne agreed to do his part. Need to do more training for the Board, as is the law, and there are board members who still need training.

Ron: Committees were formed to help have discussions to handle these things. Mr. McMahon believed that the committees were canceled before they were un-authorized by the board and that is a governance issue. The way that this was handled caused friction and was not handled appropriately.

3. Grant Update (Amy Libman had to leave)

VI. SPACE UPDATES, CONTRACTS, BIDS AND LEASES (Part 1)

1. Business Contract Proposal Approvals

- a. RFP Process Contract: Reporting on results of the RFP requests for contracts for 2008-2010

The Request for Proposal process was fair and open. The review committee has no problem recommending the full contract with Designs for Learning. **Mr. McMahon moved to accept the contract with Designs for Learning. Mr. Egeh seconded. Carried**

Discussion about contract proposal from Designs for Learning. There seems to be embedded in the contract estimated number of hours. Are these realistic? Ms. Meade answered that these estimates were based on historical data from previous years and reflected accurate estimations of time. Is this an apples to apples from the RFP? Who was compared? As well as those companies who submitted, SBS, Payroll companies, consortiums, 287, 916, MACS Project were all asked to submit bids. Ms. Ander asked what is the "+" after the Tech and Sped sections? Ms. Meade replied that these are only if additional services are needed and only at the request of MNIC. Mr. Byrne – there is a cut back of over \$100,000 from previous years' contracts, but there may be additional billing if we need a project completed.

2. Sabathani ABE program

The Sabathani ABE program is the oldest ABE consortium in MN. Sabathani is finding it difficult to continue to operate the program in their current mode due to increasing costs but no increase in revenues. They are the only consortium that allows MNIC to participate. Sabathani approached MNIC to ask to take it over management and operation of the consortium. This includes taking over the instructional program. Currently they employ a 30-hour per week teacher, have many volunteers and contract for data processing. Revenue is about \$250,000. The state budget for ABE Programs is fixed by the State legislature. Money is paid in the current year based on activities and use in the previous year. If there is an increase in total number of learners in all state programs, then the revenue per student drops proportionally. Data reporting and requirements are completely different for ABE compared to K-12 education.

Handout: Sabathani Learning Center Proposal

The Sabathani Learning Center would effectively share space between ABE and MNIC. MNIC's new space in the former Friendship Academy space is directly adjacent to the ABE space. To make this consortium work there must be effective control of costs. MNIC lease aid for space will eliminate space costs for the consortium as long as the program (9th to adult) is integrated and there are a small number of ABE students compared to 9-12 students. With this plan the ABE can "increase" net revenue and possibly expand services.

There is no risk to MNIC this next year – the money attached to student service hours is earned in 2007-2008 and the program gets paid in 2008-2009.

Mr. Byrne is asking the board for the OK to finalize this agreement for the ABE program. Unknown issues include the fiscal agency fee (See #6 on the page 1 of the memorandum of understanding proposal, that Sabathani will retain a % fee).

The annual ABE Consortium renewal application is due (June 1), before the next board meeting. The application is about 50 pages long. In Year 5 the consortium must submit a 200 page narrative. This is required next year for Sabathani ABE.

Mr. Ron White – Costs in terms of bottom line? It is pretty much risk free for one year, because funds are committed for this next year. Also MNIC can offer ABE service to the Unity Circle. Mr. McMahon: Why is Sabanthani getting out of it? Mr. Byrne: There is not sufficient increase in State revenues relative to costs and not sufficient support without a school district to help carry the costs. Ms. Libman: MNIC will not get funding for adult learners (over 20-yrs old) at ELA without an ABE program.

Mr. McMahon: What is the risk? Mr. Byrne: This next year (2008-2009) Sabathani is the fiscal agent and there is guaranteed funding for this next year; but it is a year-to-year contract so we can get out. There is a risk to the program if the Consortium dramatically increases the number of students. Since the money doesn't flow until the next year, this means enrollment will need to stay level. Another risk is if the expenses get too high.

Total budget, which includes the ELA adults, is \$260,000. \$100,000 goes for ELA adult program. Remainder goes to Sabathani. This is not a real money maker, but is an important service. If this closes MNIC will lose the \$100,000 and benefits to students.

Mary: Nonprofits may open up new avenues for enhancing programs. Like with American Indian OIC – There are benefits for nursing students with PSEO credit. MNIC can enroll students in this program (8 received scholarship). Other programs may open up if MNIC has an ABE program – can collect 12 hours on OJT (\$60/week/student)

Mr. Gross: The manager of Sabathani ABE can assist right now. He (Art) is writing the ABE grant renewal application. He may also be able to help with other grant writing for MNIC.

Ms. Ander moved to give Mr. Byrne authority to go forward with the Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Sabathani ABE Program, after negotiations on lease costs and fees with the Sabathani Learning Center. Mrs. White seconded. Carried.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (KEVIN BYRNE)

1. General progress report

MNIC is in good shape financially. No additional money needed for cash flow. Need to get some authorization for the bank.

2. Student enrollment update

Enrollment handout distributed. Enrollment totals: 437, ADM 433.49 MNIC is being paid on 420 ADM.

ELA has been recruiting. Circle sites have good retention.

We would like to join the MN High School League and put a program into the budget for soccer and basketball – Mustangs – East and West. Also need to serve girls and boys. There has been some discussion of donations for uniforms.

Questions needing answers and Comments: What about Track and Field, cross country? If we join the league, then students can go to other schools for \$200. Can the East kids and West kids train together to help with the segregation issues? Can MNIC be seen as one school or as each site as a school?

3. Calendar discussion (potential 2008-09 calendar)

Latest draft for school calendar was passed out. It will be finalized in June.

VIII. STUDENT FRATERNIZATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In MN staff dating with 18 year old students is not illegal. However, MNIC wants to adopt a policy that there is to be no fraternization with students. Board, please look at the proposed policy for comment and vote to adopt at the next board meeting.

IX. AYP REPORT (JON GROSS)

Staff Trainings are available for a school in AYP for teachers and staff.

MNIC submitted a \$100,000 math teacher grant for ELA. Metro ECSU is supporting this with free training as a result of being in AYP. Metro ECSU provides free training service for schools in AYP and they have been very helpful.

X. FINANCE (KEVIN BYRNE)

1. Receipts and disbursements

Budget for 08-09 will be brought to the next meeting. Budget for 07-08 will need to be revised. MDE has a school report card section on the web

XI. ELECTIONS (KEVIN BYRNE)

MNIC Board election forms are prepared and will be distributed to staff, students and mailed to families.

XII. SPACE UPDATES, CONTRACTS, BIDS AND LEASES (Part 2)

ELA Transportation is out for bid. ELA Evening and weekend Building Management/Cleaning is out for bid. MNIC seeks bid for cleaning at ELA not because current vendor is not ok but to update pricing based on web survey of rates. We are happy with current service.

XIII. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM.

Submitted by Pamela Meade and Stephen C. Bosacker.