

MNIC ELA Campus
300 Industrial Blvd.
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

Unapproved Minutes
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Thursday, June 5, 2008
3:30 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, Sabathani Community Center 2006 Annual Report; Unapproved minutes for February 7 and May 1, 2008; Student Fraternalization Policy Draft; proposed policy on notification to staff of violent behavior by students; Financial Statements; Revised budget 2007-2008; Budget for 2008-2009; Proposed contract LarsonAllen Audit Agreement; MN High School League proposed agreement; MNIC 2008-09 Calendar; Sabathani Community Center 2006 Annual Report.

I. ROLL CALL

Mr. Ron White called the meeting to order at 3:54 PM at the ELA Site.

Members in attendance: Abdirahman Egeh, Vin McMahon, Ron White, Rebecca Gutierrez, Kassim Mohamed. Tardy: Janet White (Sabathani ABE Discussion). Absent: Mary Ander, Abdighani Ali, and Elizabeth Gedatus-Garcia.

Ex officio and others in attendance: Executive Director Kevin Byrne, Executive Assistant Patsy Brooks. Others: Jon Gross (Principal for Circle Sites), Carrie Otis (teacher ELA), John Breyfogle (teacher ELA), Amy Libman (Director of Volunteer Programs and Student Support Services), Kathy Reamer (teacher Unity), Stephen Bosacker and Susan Airhart (Designs for Learning).

II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Request to move Open Mike to before Approval of minutes

Ms. Gutierrez moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Egeh seconded. Carried.

III. OPEN MICROPHONE

1. Ms. Ottis is the ELA science teacher. She and her science students have started researching a recycling project. They researched what is thrown away at ELA campus. The school (entire) pays \$11,200 for plastic throw-away tray. Also pays \$4000 per year for plastic flatware for all sites. The group proposes the school invest in a dishwasher and wash eating wares. Ms. Gutierrez suggested this would be an opportunity for students to get training and earn credits. This plan would not work for the other sites, however. More factors need to be considered. More research is needed to clarify how realistic this plan is and likely savings. Ms. Libman contributed information. Mr. White

suggested the school could purchase used trays and plates. There are other facility factors to consider (power, hot water, etc.). Ms. Airhart recounted research she did on recyclable bamboo bowls, etc. if the school needs to continue without a washing system. Possibly use tenant improvement money for this change. Steve Bosacker will bring this plan idea to the school architect meeting next week.

Mr. McMahon moved to investigate this proposal for the school. Mr. Egeh seconded. Carried.

2. Kathy Reamer reported on Circle Sites. A Student Council was started this year for the Circle Sites. Fund raisers for Circle Sites. They set up a school store, received a grant for a refrigerator through Youth Venture. Raised \$4115.41 and have a balance of \$1800.05 to start next year, after expenses. Students are excited about these ventures. The Prom Dance went very well. A lady from St. Thomas helped by donating a ball room, dance floor, coach bus transportation to and from Unity to the ball room. MNIC paid for food. Young men were fitted and dressed with keep-able shoes for \$75. A place at the Mall of America donated many free dresses and attire for the young women. There may be a student activity fund set up for next year to make this kind of activity more easily managed. Comment from Mr. Gross – when students had to raise money they also worked together. This was more valuable than the money they raised.

Question about how accounting works for these kinds of activities. Susan explained some of this. As of this year, all the money raised is under the Board's control.

Next year the Circle site students will do a fund raiser bagging food at Cub Foods once a month. Normal Prom Dance budget is around \$4000. Ms. Airhart suggested that if the money raised is small enough, it would be worth keeping the funds within MNIC. If the amount of money gets large, then moving to an alternative fund management scheme would be good.

MNIC students were the best group of students to use the St. Thomas University ballroom in their behavior and politeness. All the staff complemented them. They commended the group to come back again.

The Board should approve donations and have letters sent to donors. Ms. Reamer will communicate with donors if they would like a tax deductible receipt or acknowledgement.

3. Ms. Libman commended the school for two very good graduations. Patsy Brooks did a very good job. Shiloh Temple Church did a very good job hosting the graduation for Circle Sites. Ms. Gutierrez suggested next year the school have more translation help for those who speak other languages.
4. Mr. Egeh requested MNIC provide science lab resources for next year. This will greatly help the science program at ELA. Mr. Bosacker will bring this request to the school architect next week.
5. Ms. Gutierrez recounted how the school is working on recruiting students this summer. It would greatly help to have a contact person available year round for people in the community to contact the school and to help support recruiting efforts.

Mr. Byrne asked change in agenda to move the Sabathani ABE Proposal to be next on the agenda, to accommodate Mr. Seratoff's availability. This change was made by consensus.

IV. SPACE UPDATES, CONTRACTS, BIDS AND LEASES

1. Sabathani Adult Basic Education (ABE) Proposal (Kevin Byrne and Art Seratoff)

Sabathani leaders reexamined the proposal discussed at the last MNIC Board meeting. They submitted the application, which was due June 1, for next year.

Mr. Byrne explained that the ABE management and accounting system is completely different from the K-12 Education system. ABE Income for MNIC is about \$100,000 per year. The presence of adult learners in the MNIC classes provides a significant stabilizing influence on student behavior.

MNIC would partner with Sabathani to operate this program. Almost all the other consortiums are run by large school districts. These school districts don't want others to participate in this system and funding formulas favor the ISD school districts. Sabathani ABE will be much stronger by partnering with MNIC. Through this proposal MNIC would manage the ABE budget and employees with this money, except for a portion to be used for Sabathani oversight. Mr. Seratoff is acting director right now.

Sabathani is excited about this program partnership. This will result in a stronger learning environment and better adult attendee learning. Sabathani is 40 years old, and owns and operates the community center at 310 38th St E. The whole building is a resource to the community, with 40 other agencies and non-profit orgs present in the building. These provide a wide range of services to the community. Sabathani seeks to further integrate these services. The community knows Sabathani. The Center's credibility is hopefully increased by this ABE partnership. Sabathani would like the hand-off to happen by July 1. The primary source of funding for Sabathani ABE is state consortium funds. However, Sabathani also raises other funds. Sabathani ABE has experience with ESL, GE Prep, Workforce Training for computers and office assistant training. Students often start with low literacy skills. Through this partnership, adult learners would be able to earn a high school diploma.

The number of people on ABE staff is very small. As the number of funded hours available decreases by state funding, the Sabathani ABE affords fewer teachers and staff. This trend has continued until this year only 1.5 FTE positions can be supported at Sabathani ABE. Many others volunteer as tutors (3.0 FTE) and aids (1.0 FTE). The center now is open 3 nights a week for 12 hours total. With partnership, the program can share space with MNIC within the new Sabathani Learning Center to share resources and activities.

MNIC ABE income is about \$100,000 per year. If Sabathani ABE closes, this income will be lost and adult learners would not be able to continue learning with MNIC, specifically the evening program at ELA. Some MNIC Staff hours are covered by this money. Funding by the State is year-to-year with very high probability of renewal, as long as the Consortium continues its practices. Whether the State will fund at the same level or better is never certain.

The consortium's goal is to maintain current levels of service and, if possible, expand effectiveness to serve more learners. If the consortium does not continue, funding is lost and service is lost. Next June the Consortium must prepare the 5 year large application. The biggest risk is the approval process for next year. When MNIC becomes the new fiscal agent, then there must be approval to go forward.

This Proposal would return 8% of budget to Sabathani to act as the fiscal agent this year. Sabathani also wants to keep 8% of extra funds raised by Sabathani for the consortium. Sabathani wants to expand the service and revitalize equipment. Sabathani genuinely needs someone else to carry the administration of this consortium. To close this would be a shame for the community. Mr. Byrne and Mr. Gross have some experience with ABE programs, but they are out of date on current practices. They suggest bringing in someone to carry the administration of this program, as this is more than Mr. Seratoff can carry. Consortium received \$238,000 this year. The state allows the consortium to grow at 11% a year. Ms. Libman could write an Americorps grant to provide someone else to help the consortium work. This program currently serves youth 16 years and older at Sabathani. Current Sabathani ABE staff want the

whole program to stay. The name will remain Sabathani ABE. Only 2 community agencies are consortiums. The original law was written for only school districts, but community agencies were allowed in, but without full funding that the districts get.

Sabathani will bring a memorandum of understanding in about 1 month. Mr. Byrne will present the MNIC case to Sabathani's Board.

Ms. Gutierrez moved that MNIC take over the administration of the Sabathani ABE with payment of 8% fee to Sabathani to oversee and 8% of grants gained by Sabathani grant writing for the consortium. Mr. McMahon seconded. Carried.

I. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (KEVIN BYRNE)

1. General progress report

Graduation ceremonies were tremendous.

2. Diplomas

Mr. Byrne would like the school board to approve all diplomas at the annual meeting.

3. Student Enrollment Update

ADM as of 5/28/08 is 431.84. With enrollment of 428. 426 ADM would provide income to break even for the budget.

II. VOLUNTEER UPDATE (AMY LIBMAN)

1. Amy Libman hired a new Vista volunteer for ELA from NW College. This is the last year for the Vista program (5th year) at MNIC. She will consider how to continue the same level of service within the school afterwards.

Macalester College will be recycling their graduation gowns every year. They will donate gowns to MNIC. This year they will donate 130 for MNIC's graduation.

Relationship with the College of St. Catherine (St. Kate's) continues to improve. MNIC will receive one free work study student to help.

A new mural on canvas will be completed soon for the Circle Sites. This is from a \$4000 grant from Compass for the artist, plus paint donated by Hirshfield's.

III. STUDENT FRATERNIZATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Second reading for the policy. Requires no dating and undue relationships with students by school staff. Schools do have problems with fraternization between staff and students. Mr. Gross reviewed scenarios in a school if this is allowed, with various liabilities and problems resulting.

Mr. McMahon moved to accept the Student Fraternization Policy proposal. Mr. Mohamed seconded. Carried.

IV. TEACHER NOTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT/PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH A HISTORY OF VIOLENT BEHAVIOR (SECOND READING) (KEVIN BYRNE)

Second reading for the policy. MSBA policy for this issue addresses teacher union situations and is very long. Some schools that adopted that policy regret it. This proposed policy points to best practices instead of incorporating practices into the policy. Staff will receive training on sexual harassment and practices related to this policy.

Ms. Gutierrez moved to approve the policy for teacher notification of students with a history of violent behavior (first page of handout). Ms. White seconded.

Discussion: Correct typos in the practices section that follows in the handout. **Carried.**

V. ELECTIONS (KEVIN BYRNE)

For the MNIC Board Advisory Election the top votes were for Kaha, Jama, Hassan. (vote counts). Mr. Byrne expressed concern that 8 of 9 board members are from ELA. The Board has agreed to honor the election.

Mr. McMahon expressed anger that Mr. Byrne did not announce winners of the election to the winners prior to the Board meeting. He was also offended that Mr. Byrne expressed his view to the Board that the Board is not representative for Circle sites and that Mr. McMahon is not able to effectively represent the Circle Sites interest. Mr. Egeh believes there should be representation for the Circles. Mr. Mohamed suggested that the Board can make changes after discussion for next year. Mr. White agreed that the winners should be elected. Cannot change the election. The Board has the right to make changes, though Mr. White does not want to do this. He suggested the Board look at what to do in the future.

Mr. McMahon thinks that there is an implication that he is not open minded enough to learn from other sites what their needs are and act wisely for them. To think that duly elected people are not willing and able to represent this is wrong.

Ms. Gutierrez believes every board member has duty to try to be informed about these sites' needs and issues.

Ms. White commented that though she understands some things about the ELA site, she would not be able to represent them well to the Board.

Mr. Egeh thinks there is an issue of the image of representation for the other sites and he could not satisfy this for the Circle Sites.

Mr. McMahon rehearsed responsibilities of board members to consider the highest for the school and suggested he would vote for the good of the school, even at his own hurt.

Mr. White does not think that this discussion is about bias. He is concerned that perceptions among the students that they are over or under-represented. If students see that there is no chance for the ones they would like to represent them, what should they do?

Discussion shifted to explore change for next year.

Ms. Gutierrez wants a rule that if Board members are too often absent they loose membership on the Board.

Mr. Byrne affirmed requests by Ms. Gutierrez that there be attendance requirements. He also suggested that there be a time for the Board to have a workshop on governance. Mr. McMahon expressed his expectation that there be an agenda item to talk about governance issues.

Mr. Bosacker presented to the Board the need to clarify how they will determine a Board chair now that the Board is entirely from MNIC staff. Mr. White replied they are getting counsel from the school's lawyer.

Seeking to identify a clear expectation how many absences and what kind of absence would be allowed.

Mr. McMahon moved to accept the election results by counted votes, with the ones with most votes winning. Mr. White seconded. Carried, Ms. White abstained.

Ms. Gutierrez moved that if a Board member cannot serve as a member within 1 month being seated after the election, the next person in line in the election will be seated. Mr. Egeh Seconded. Carried.

VI. MN HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE APPLICATION (KEVIN BYRNE)

Proposal and application for MN High School League presented. Starting with: MNIC East: Girls basketball, Boys Basketball, Girls and boys soccer; MNIC West (Circle Sites) Girls and Boys basketball and Cheerleading.

Discussions about track and cross country. The West Sites named their teams the Mustangs. East sites not ready yet.

Costs for all sports and program would be around \$40,000. This money would be needed to cover fees for gym, coach salaries, referee fees, transportation, and other costs.

Discussion about how many teams should be developed. Should MNIC Teams compete against each other, as Minneapolis High Schools do now? Mr. Mohamed would like MNIC only play against other schools. The rationale for two different teams is that there would be too many students for one team. However there are ways to approach this – such as having Varsity and Junior Varsity teams. Having one “team” for one sport would promote a number of valuable things for the school and community. Mr. Byrne supported this concept enthusiastically.

Mr. McMahon moved to approve submission of applications for MNIC Sports. Mr. Mohamed seconded. Carried.

VII. CALENDAR FOR 2008-2009

Latest draft presented after more input from staff. Early dismissals on the calendar are intended for staff meeting times. After approved this will be the official calendar.

Mr. Mohamed Moved to accept this calendar for the 2008-2009 year. Ms. White seconded. Carried.

VIII. FINANCE (KEVIN BYRNE)

1. Receipts and disbursements (Susan Airhart)

2. Revised 2007-2008 Budget (Susan Airhart)

Ms. Airhart revised a budget mid-year after increasing salaries. Since then expenses and income have changed. Extra income from lease aid from last year that was not booked as accrued revenue for last year, which counts for this year. The new revised budget is based on 433 ADM. There is yet unapproved lease aid anticipated for this budget.

Mr. Egeh moved to approve the budget. Mr. White seconded. This budget reflects the reality of the school's situation. The intention was to have a break even budget. There will be enough cash for the school. If ADM drops then the budget will be less.
Carried.

3. 2008-2009 Budget (Susan Airhart)

Through discussions with Administration the budget is built on 440 ADM for next year. This considers projections of the holdback to come. This budget has the same staffing and salaries as this year. Mr. Byrne wants to have ADM drive the budget. If 460 ADMs then teachers get raises, if 480 ADMs then all get a raise, if 400 ADMs there would be cuts. Everyone is part of the outreach and recruiting for the school. This does not include the ABE money for the new partnership.

The School has indicated to the State to get paid according to 440 ADM. This is a starting point for the budget, and it can be changed if needed. There will be a budget revision in October.

Ms. White moved to adopt the budget as presented. Mr. Mohamed seconded. Carried.

IX. SPACE UPDATES, CONTRACTS, BIDS AND LEASES

1. Sabathani ABE Proposal (Kevin Byrne and Art Seratoff)

Covered earlier in the meeting.

2. Contract with LarsonAllen for FY2008 Audit

Letter of Engagement from LarsonAllen was presented to Board for the FY 2008 Audit. Questions: about value of seeking other auditors. LarsonAllen is highly respected auditor for charter schools. Fees have not been over \$10,000, and increases as the school's size increases. One member wondered if this fee is normal for audit fees. LarsonAllen's people know MNIC.

Mr. Egeh moved to accept the LarsonAllen proposal. Ms. Gutierrez seconded with the caveat that next year MNIC compare fees. Carried.

X. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 7th AND MAY 1st BOARD MEETING

Discussion about what amounts of content to include in minutes. Mr. White suggested identify agenda items for which action should be taken. Cover these items first in the agenda, so that if long discussions ensue there is not risk of losing quorum.

Mr. McMahon moved to approve the unapproved minutes for February 2008 and May 2008 Board meeting as presented. Ms. White seconded. Carried.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:48 PM.

Submitted by Stephen C. Bosacker.