



# INTERNATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOL OF TRENTON

105 Grand Street Trenton, NJ 08611 609/394-3111 [fax 394-3116]

## ICST Board of Trustees MINUTES for October 7, 2020

*Opening of meeting, 5:32 pm. Trustees participating were, Rachel Binz (RB) , Kim Sdeo (KS) and Bob Kull (BK, presiding). Also present were Melissa Benford (MB, chief school administrator), Peter Lanzi (PL, Business Administrator) and David Bosted (DB). Call to Order. Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance. All provisions of the Open Public Meeting Law of 1976 "Sunshine Law" NJ Public Law 231 were met in the scheduling and public notice of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct regular business of the public charter school.*

*1. Minutes and Public Comment. Review and adoption of minutes for the September 2, 2020 meeting. Motion to approve, m/RB, s/KS, yes, KS, RB, BK, unanimously approved. MB reported that members of the public had the opportunity to provide comments in advance but she had received no public comments for the Trustees and no requests to join the meeting.*

*2. Governance, School management, (a) MB reported that ICST is successfully operating for 2020-21 academic year, with a fully virtual opening. ICST plans to operate in virtual mode until at least November 13. (b) No new Policy updates in response to COVID-19. (c) MB reported that most students are responding well and teachers are enthusiastic. There is a general wish that COVID would disappear and things could just return to normal. (d) BK said congratulations to Melissa and all ICST staff for their success in encouraging attendance and participation at all levels. He asked the CSA to pass the appreciation of the Trustees on to the ICST staff. He said that "Resilient" could be added to the ICST letterhead. (e) MB reported that operating virtually until after Winter break is under consideration.*

*3. Financial Report and Review of expenditures, income, budget. (a) Board Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies report for August. The reports agree and were arrived at independently. m/KS, s/RB, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous approval. The monthly payroll totals for September, 2020 @ \$89,078.16, reviewed and approved, m/RB, s/KS, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous. There were no transfers of funds. (b-c) Review & approval of expenditures & resolutions to pay final bill list total for September, \$37,151.31. Motion to approve, m/RB, s/KS, yes KS, RB, BK, unanimous. (d) Other financial information. None discussed.*

*4. Grants. MB reported that Title I eligible students are being identified, and the parent meeting will be conducted virtually. The process is slowed due to remote operations. EASA is in "review" status and money is not flowing from that source. The CARES Act money is flowing, and is being spent down at ICST. ICST may benefit from a \$65M grant administered by NJPCSA. An expansion grant could be helpful as ICST plans for the 2021-26 Renewal Application, due next October.*

*5. Report on Staffing, Personnel and Employee Issues (a) MB said that remote instruction is proceeding successfully. Many people tell us that they miss live instruction, however ICST is open and providing quality instruction. Virtual school at ICST was strong last Spring, with good participation, but is definitely improved this year. (b) MB reported two hiring opportunities will occur, for a Title I teacher and for a maternity leave replacement teacher. (c) Scheduling is set up to ensure that all classes have the support they need from teaching assistants.*

**ICST Board of Trustees Minutes, October 7, 2020 (continued)**

6. *Executive Session (optional, no exec session held).*

7. *"Under the Gold Dome." Former school board member and board president Laura Waters has an interesting blog on education (although she is not an advocate for charter schools or school choice). She has statistics that indicate ICST had enormously higher online participation by students during Spring 2020 than did the Trenton school district. NJDOE continues to operate with an interim Commissioner. He is a financial expert rather than an experienced educational expert or school superintendent. School districts that are using the hybrid model, partly open but mostly virtual, are finding that it is exhausting for the teaching staff to present one educational program online while supervising classrooms with students.*

8. *Report on School Days, Student Achievement, Attendance and Enrollment. (a) MB reported that there are no interruptions to virtual learning at ICST. Chrome books and hot spots have been distributed, and tech support is ongoing. Base line assessments for students continue to be established. (b) Attendance has been excellent and student participation has exceeded all expectations. (c.) At this time, ICST has one opening in fourth grade. COVID has complicated the registration of students.*

9. *Report on Facility. (a) Air flow has emerged as an issue, Statewide. FEMA money cannot be used to implement improvements to air quality, because those would be long-term improvements not directly tied to COVID. At ICST, there are no hospital-grade air handling HVAC system improvements such as in stairwells, so the improvements to COVID readiness have been in the area of best practices. (b) Fire and emergency drills will adhere to recommendations from the Office of Emergency Management. There are no students in the building to participate in drills, however. There are 5 to 10 staff members in the building at any given time, so ICST staff members participate in the drills. A communications drill identified an opportunity to improve emergency readiness, so the drills can be useful, even without students.*

10. *School Operations (a) MB reported on Food Service operations. The summer arrangements for food distribution proved to be successful so those arrangements continue, in order to avoid COVID transmittal. Parent participation is good and continue to increase. (b) The HRC is having painting work done to the school and surrounding properties. HRC is moving to evict the tenants on their neighboring property.*

11. *Old (unfinished) Business. None discussed.*

12. *Correspondence review, if any. None discussed.*

13. *Trustee business and announcements. BOT Meetings for the 2020-21 year will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, starting at 5:15 PM. Meeting dates will be 11/4, 12/2, 1/6, 2/3, 3/3, 4/7, 5/5, 6/2, 7/7, 8/4, 2020.*

14. *Adjourn. 6:00 PM.*