

Integration Charter Schools

**Board of Trustees Meeting**

**DRAFT- Minutes  
November 19, 2020@ 6:32PM**

<b>Trustees Present</b>	Joseph Carroll, David Lehr, Jill Patel, Dirk Tillotson, Deborah Miller, Ed Fucini, Sheldon Blackman, Mike Caridi, R. Lefkowitz,
<b>Trustees Absent</b>	Doris Schueler, Bonnie Fritz, John Strand, Nelly Tournaki, Denise Henick
<b>Staff Present</b>	Ken Byalin, Mary Cottingham, Dana Volini, Rei Rexa
<b>Parents Present</b>	None
<b>Others Present</b>	Dr. Kathlyn Barrett-Layne, Francisco Lugovina
<b>Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Minutes and Committee Reports</b>	A motion was made by David Lehr seconded by Robin Lekowitz and unanimously approved to accept the November 19, 2020 agenda, October 2020 Board meeting minutes and committee reports.
<b>Committee Meetings/Reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Executive Committee Report:</b> <b>The committee met on 11/04/2020</b></li> </ul> <p>Present Deborah Miller, Jill Patel, David Lehr, John Strand, Ken Byalin Mary Cottingham and Sharena Tirado.</p> <p>New Ventures: Project Based Learning (PBL) will conduct training for teachers for the expansion. NV will propose a change in admission language to add 9<sup>th</sup> grade, formerly it was 10<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. NV enrollment cohort will be 18-20. July summer admission begins with transfer students having 16 credits and 2 years behind.</p> <p>Facilities: Discussed Barnes and Noble – purchase of building, signing of contract by ICS Foundation, to establish lease between ICS Foundation and ICS. The Executive Board’s discussion of the application process for bond finances and Build NYC approval by NYC Mayor. Since our meeting on November 4<sup>th</sup> the Barnes and Noble purchase deal was withdrawn from the table by Barnes and Noble. See President’s Report concerning the conclusion of the matter.</p> <p>Facilities: CC3 – 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is expected to open September 2021 late spring some open houses are expected to be held. Some of our staff/principals have visited the space.</p>

CC1 and 2: students are in school and things are going well. ICS is looking at expanding in person classes. See President's report for updates and changes.

Real-estate: Our lawyers are expected to meet with Eltingville Luther representatives to discuss ICS part in the case with the Synod concerning our deposit.

Dr Ken Byalin's Evaluation: In the process of being completed by ICS Executive Board, reviewed with Dr Byalin, signed and submitted by Chairperson, Deborah Miller.

- **Finance & Audit Committee Report:**  
**This committee met on 11/04/20**

Present: David Lehr, Jill Patel, Joe Carroll, Ken Byalin, Dana Volini, Jonathan Lipschitz and Priyanga Iddamalgoda.

Began discussion with the financial projections for the Barnes & Noble potential transaction for Richmond Prep School location. The financial projections detailed the sources and uses of funds for the project. All attendees were in agreement with the financial projections which showed positive balances for the project overall.

Discussed the September financials for ICS. All schools were thus far operating with positive net income. Overall ICS was well within budget; however, New Ventures was coming in short of budget. It was agreed we would present an updated forecast for New Ventures at the next scheduled meeting. New Ventures student enrollment is under budget which causes their budgeted to actual income variance to be under budget. The cash flow statement for September showed a normal amount of income and expenses. Cash balances were consistent with expected amounts.

Discussed the status of our current FDIC limits for our bank accounts. Ground work has been done to analyze our options and will be available to discuss at the next scheduled meeting.

- **Governance and Nominating Committee Report:**  
**This Committee did not meet in November.**

- **Education and Accountability Report**

**This Committee met on 11/18/20**

Trustees present: Doris Schueler, Nelly Tournaki, John Strand, Dirk Tillotson. Deborah Miller, Bonnie Fritz

Enrollment and attendance- the Committee reviewed the enrollment (including SpEd and ED disaggregation) attendance and chronic absence

numbers from the schools, as well as the school interventions. There was some discussion around the challenges students faced and the multiple ways that students can engage with school—given some of their home situations. New Ventures came off a record graduation and is continuing to enroll students daily, they have also shown real progress in reducing chronic absences, Lavelle Prep HS is facing some challenges with the freshmen class but is addressing those issues.

The Committee discussed the actual college readiness effects of distance learning and a preview of the graduate profile that we will address in depth at a future meeting. Nicotra also discussed its program and the dual enrollment track in some detail, alongside the partnership with St. Johns University.

MAP testing- the Committee discussed the reintroduction of Measured Academic Progress (MAP) as our interim assessment. While we believe this is better aligned with the standards and NYS testing than Scantron, there are always some issues in implementation and changing the system, particularly with all the challenges. This is an adaptive exam that gets harder as students are more successful, so it can be frustrating for some students, and different than what they are used to. Similarly, there is significant PD to staff on administration and interpretation and usage of the data. We reviewed the baseline data from the schools. Noting that Lavelle Middle, while very successful at developing students to be high school ready, shows a flatter trajectory of achievement that we would like, particularly in the earlier grades. Staff are reviewing the alignment with our program and the standards tested to better understand this seeming discrepancy (our students test well on HS readiness, yet perform relatively poorly on the MS standardized tests) and address it.

• **Fundraising Committee Report:**  
**This committee met on 10/29/20**

Present: Mike Caridi, Denise Henick, David Lehr, Mary Cottingham, Erin Celletti, Samantha LoCasta, and Jill Patel

Newsletter

The school newsletter was distributed to about 750 friends.

Letter of solicitation

It was agreed to revise the fundraising letter to

    Include all the counseling services

    Emphasize the uniqueness of these offerings

    Stress the need to offer more support during the pandemic

Erin will speak to counseling staff and draft a new letter. It will be reviewed by the committee before distribution.

Both electronic and hard copies of the letter will be sent; the hard copy will include an insert with instructions for mailing checks.

Target distribution date is 11/6/20

	<p><u>Soliciting parents</u> The staff will speak to Ken and the principals about a fundraising campaign for parents - \$5 Family Fund – as well. Depending on their response, Jill will contact the Nicotra PTA president to make sure we have her support and design a separate outreach. Use Giving Tuesday as springboard and encourage staff to post on social media accounts.</p> <p><u>Board members contributions</u> The Committee will reach out to the few Board members who haven't yet determined their 2020 contribution.</p> <p><u>Next meeting</u> The group will meet next at 8:00 am on Wednesday, November 11, 2020 and the staff will send a Zoom link.</p>
<b>Presidents Report</b>	<p>This has been a year of challenges, beginning as the year began with challenging ourselves to improve special education at ICS and strengthen our pathway to teaching initiative. Key initiatives included a commitment to dramatically increase compensation for dually-certified, core content teachers in order to increase teacher motivation to obtain the second certification. In the shorter term, we would replace teacher assistants in many core classes with SPED-certified co- teachers at a substantial increase in cost.</p> <p>Then the Blue Wave Challenge hit. We received a warning from our authorizer: We could no longer count on Lavelle Prep's high school graduation rate to carry us past lagging scores on statewide tests in Lavelle Prep Elementary and Middle School Divisions. We understand the middle school performance differently. The groundwork is being done there on which the high school achievement rests. But we did not ignore the warning. A number of changes were pending but we accelerated the process, instituting a sweeping leadership change at Lavelle Prep as well as a complete reorganization of instruction leadership at ICS. A new team, all of whom have been part of our team since the earliest years, took the helm at Lavelle Prep, Jenna Curran as principal of the elementary division, Kristina Mazza as principal of the middle school, and Dori Rexha as principal of the high school.</p> <p>At the senior staff level, Aimee Horowitz as Vice President for Education, Instructional Excellence, and Theresa Peterford as Vice President for Education, Integration Excellence, were appointed to lead our faculty into the next decade. They quickly developed a plan for improving instruction while strengthening our commitment to the spirit of IDEA.</p> <p>Then Covid hit. The world was turned upside down. Our instructional teams (as well as our administrative teams) made the change to a totally remote environment. We received kudos from parents as schools around the City and State struggled. Although statewide testing was cancelled, curtailing our ability particularly at Lavelle Prep to assess our progress, our high schools achieved outstanding graduation rates.</p> <p>As threats of cuts in State funding loomed, we initiated a budgeting process which brought school leaders into a more active role in the process</p>

than they had ever had before. This process, begun prior to Covid, was a challenge, presenting a steep learning curve. But it was successful. As of this writing, we do not know if there will be further budget cuts but we are well-prepared, having taken a variety of steps to restrain costs, having received a PPP loan and encouraged by the possibility of an additional Main Street loan. We have done this while sustaining our mission critical initiative to strengthen special education instruction and sustain and strengthen our teacher pathway initiative.

Then George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis. While still working remotely, we began to look at how this national trauma would impact us, our staff, our students, our community. How would ICS rise to the occasion? This work is continuing through monthly meetings in all our schools as we look together at our Values through the lens of race. We appointed our first Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This is an ongoing process as we learn together to create a better environment for teaching and learning for the entire ICS community.

At the same time, we were planning for the next step in our response to the Covid challenge. Our plan, to offer all families a choice between remaining fully remote or shifting to a blended learning model in which students attended in-person classes one day a week, was submitted to the State on time. Our teams were ready and our schools all opened safely as scheduled on September 10. And we expanded our Elementary Division at the same time to begin serving students in kindergarten through second grade. All in all, a remarkable achievement.

And now the challenge of replication is presenting itself. The New Ventures renewal, itself a high point of the year, and the recognition of New Ventures as the highest performing transfer high school in New York State has led us to a place where we are being seriously encouraged to replicate. What a gigantic accomplishment that is. Until now, ICS has been the developer and incubator of new school designs. Now we are being asked to take the next step. Will anything happen this year? We don't know. Because of Covid, it remains uncertain whether NYSED will even issue an RFP for new charters this year. But we have begun discussions with interested residents of Southampton and Yonkers about the possibility of bringing the New Ventures magic to their communities.

Last year, our annual audit was delivered to the State late, a source of significant embarrassment. Early this last year, Jonathan Lipschitz joined our team as Director of Finance to, among other things, help assure that we do better. Good news: a clean audit was delivered to the State on time.

And we are continuing to work on finding a home for our fourth school, Richmond Prep which will open in September. The disappointing news is that although we were very close to a contract to purchase the old Barnes & Noble building on Richmond Avenue as the home for Richmond Prep, that deal has fallen through. The sellers were ultimately unwilling to allow the environmental due diligence required for us to safely acquire that property. The good news is that Richmond Prep will incubate for the first year at Corporate Commons 3.

And we will continue our hunt for a school site. The real estate business remains a challenge for us. That is not where our core competence as an organization lies. But with the help and guidance of a number of

	<p>people, most particularly Trustee Mike Caridi who has coached me through this process, we are continuing to learn. There are a number of potential properties which we are looking at. If we cannot find a suitable site for purchase by this Spring, we will move toward a lease arrangement.</p> <p>As we come to the end of this year, we are coming to the end of an era. Devora Miller has been an important part of our schools from the very beginning. As a member of the Lavelle Prep planning team, as a founding Lavelle Prep trustee has always been there from the earliest days of recruiting students to serving as Chair of the Lavelle Prep board through the merger with New Ventures, then with Jonathan Lipschitz serving as founding co-chair of the ICS board and then most recently as chair of ICS, her commitment to our mission and our schools and our students has always been number one. I am grateful for her service, for her support, and for her willingness to continue to serve.</p> <p>And at the same time, I am excited by the opportunity to work with Jill Patel as chair. I love change and am looking forward to the challenges ahead.</p>
<b>New Business Notes</b>	School remote learning and reopening was discussed. It was decided that ICS Administration will monitor the current environment on a week to week basis. Leadership will assess and make a recommendation to the Board on the viability of re-opening/blended learning.
<b>Annual Board Officer and Trustee Elections</b>	<p>A motion was made by Joe Carroll, seconded by Michael Carid and unanimous by all to accept the proposed Slate of Officers for the November 2020-2021 term, see below:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Chair – Jill Patel Vice-Chair – David Lehr Treasurer – Ed Fucini Secretary – Deborah Miller</p> <p>A motion was made by Dirk Tillotson, seconded by Robin Lefkowitz and unanimous by all to accept the Slate of Trustees recommended for re-election (three year term) for November 2020 as well as a recommendation for Trustee Dirk Tillotson to remain as the Member at Large on the Executive Committee for another term.</p> <p>Bonnie Fritz Deborah Miller David Lehr Dirk Tillotson- Member at Large</p>
<b>Resolution</b>	A motion was made by Joe Carroll, seconded by Robin Lefkowitz and unanimous by all to approve and accept the District Wide Safety Plan submitted for 2020-2021.
<b>Adjournment</b>	A motion was made by Robin Lefkowitz seconded by David Lehr and unanimous by all to adjourn the meeting at 7:12PM. The next Board of Trustees meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2020.