

French and Montessori Education, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting, May 25, 2006
Minutes

Board members present: Karl Conner, Janice Dupuy (Principal) Pierre Lebovics, Teddi Locke, Jill Otis, Sarah Ottinger (Secretary), Edwin Shorty (Vice Chairperson), Carlos Zervigon (Chairperson).

Board members excused: Laura Watts (Treasurer).

The meeting was called to order at 5:27 p.m.

I. Teacher pay structure, sick days, and sample contract.

Teacher pay structure

The first issue discussed was teacher pay raises for the 2006-2007 school year. A spreadsheet detailing the budgetary impact of teacher pay raises at 1%, 2%, and 3% had been prepared and was distributed.

Carlos reported that other schools in New Orleans were addressing teacher pay raises in varying ways. OPSB was undecided as to whether to give teachers pay raises or reductions in pay. Lusher had decided to give teachers a 1% pay raise. Algiers Charter Schools started all their teacher this year at pay equivalent to 12 years in the system, regardless of teaching experience, and was undecided whether to give raises. The state-run Recovery School District had decided to make pay raise determinations on a year-to-year basis.

Carlos reported that ACS just received close to \$400,000 in federal grants and displaced student grants, however the money must be spent by September 1, 2006, so could not be spent on teacher pay raises for 2006-2007. Carlos further reported that ACS should have \$500,000 in its account at the close of the fiscal year, June 30, 2006.

Motion: Karl moved that teachers be given a 2% pay raise for the 2006-2007 school year. He commented that a 2% raise, rather than 3% raise, would leave more money in the ACS account and that he was in favor of fiscal restraint at this point in time. Edwin seconded the motion.

Jill commented that the past year has been hard on teachers and that many lost homes. She was in favor of a 3% pay raise as a measure of ACS' good faith. She also commented that it appeared ACS was flush with money.

Edwin commented that he wouldn't object to a 3% pay raise if the Board was really comfortable that the 3% raise wouldn't put ACS in a bad spot financially.

Karl commented that the overall budget was still uncertain as the expenses and enrollment were still uncertain. He thought that once those unknowns were resolved, the Board could look at the pay raise issue again before the end of the 2006-2007 contract with teachers.

Carlos commented that it might be better to revisit the issue after summer camp at which point the Board would be able to make a more intelligent decision about pay raises.

Janice commented that teachers deserve a 3% pay raise and above. She expressed concern as well over the need to compensate teachers for the 25 additional minutes per work day since ACS reopened as well as the need to compensate teachers for Montessori training over the summer. She added that the pay raises would not include newly hired teachers.

Motion: Karl withdrew his previous motion and moved that all staff be given a 3% pay raise for the 2006-2007 school year with the understanding that they would not be reimbursed for the additional 25 minutes during the 2006-2007 school year, but that all teachers and teacher aides be reimbursed for the additional 25 minutes during the 2005-2006 school year. Edwin seconded the motion.

Lynette reported that by her calculations, \$60,000 would cover payment of the additional 25 minutes to teachers and teaching assistants.

Jill commented that by her calculations, the additional 25 minutes for the 2005-2006 school year constituted 6.7 days additional week for teachers.

The motion was opened to the public for general discussion. Based on those comments, it became clear that the 3% raise would not come close to covering the additional 25 minutes added to the work day during the 2006-2007 school year.

Motion: Karl amended his motion to simply move for a 3% pay raise for the 2006-2007 school year to all teachers and staff, across the board, with the understanding that teachers would be compensated for any additional school day time. Edwin seconded the motion.

Motion passed, unanimously: The voting members of the Board unanimously passed the motion.

Reimbursement for 2-week unpaid time

Motion: Jill moved that teachers be paid an additional two weeks salary for uncompensated time during the January, 2006-May, 2006 semester. Edwin seconded the motion.

Janice commented that under the Orleans Parish school calendar, the second semester didn't begin until January 17, 2006 and that consequently, ACS teachers had worked an additional two weeks without pay when a half-year's pay was distributed over ACS's second semester of the 2005-2006 school year.

After further Board and public discussion,

Motion passed, unanimously: the voting members of the Board unanimously passed the motion.

Sick leave

Motion: Carlos moved that teachers and staff be allowed to carry over up to 4 days sick leave per year, effective immediately. Karl seconded the motion.

Carlos commented that the short-term disability policy for employees of ACS isn't available until the 15th day out of work. In effect, the current sick leave policy, which provides for 10 days sick leave and no carry-over, leaves staff with 4 unpaid days when they must seek short-term disability. Allowing staff to carry over up to 4 days each year would mean that the days could be utilized in such a way as to provide for uninterrupted pay during a short-term disability.

No members of the public commented on the motion.

Motion passed, unanimously: the voting members of the Board unanimously passed the motion.

Teacher Contracts

Motion: Karl moved that the teacher contracts as proposed be accepted by the Board. Teddi seconded the motion.

Jill commented that she was concerned about the "duties" set out on page 1 of the contract. The section doesn't specify any limit to what can be expected of teachers.

Carlos suggested that the issue could be revisited should any complaints arise and stressed the need to approve the contract at this Board meeting.

Edwin expressed concern with the "at-will" clause of the contract. He suggested offering Montessori-certified teachers a 3-5 year contract instead of a 1-year contract.

Board members discussed the meaning of "at-will" as well as the Charter language that governs unsatisfactory performance of employees and provides for

a corrective action process as well as appeal of the Principal's termination decision to the Board.

Edwin suggested that the Charter language be added to the teacher contract. Others didn't agree with adding the Charter language.

No members of the public commented on the motion.

Motion passed, 4-1: Karl Conner, Teddi Locke, Jill Otis, and Carlos Zervigon voted in favor of the motion. Edwin Shorty voted against the motion. Pierre Lebovics was no longer present.

Executive Session

Motion: Carlos moved that the Board go into executive session for the purpose of discussing the Principal's contract.

Motion passed, unanimously: the voting members of the Board unanimously passed the motion.

The Board moved into executive session.

Upon returning from executive session:

Motion: Karl Connor and Teddi Locke jointly moved that the principal contract be approved as proposed.

Motion passed, unanimously: the voting members of the Board unanimously passed the motion.

The meeting was adjourned by general consensus.