

Minutes of the governing board of French and Montessori Education, Inc., for Saturday, April 26, 2008.

The meeting convened at the Carrollton Campus, at 10:15 a.m. Board members in attendance were Ken Ducote, Sharon Nossiter, Carlos Zervigon, Allen Wood, Edwin Shorty, Wynn Seeman, Teddi Locke, and Laura Watts. Administrators present were Janice Dupuy, Alisa Dupre, Dawn Collins and Marie-Claude Kellermann.

Agenda Items:

I. Minutes from the March meeting were approved unanimously and without discussion on a motion by Allen Wood, seconded by Edwin Shorty.

II. Administrative report was given by Janice Dupuy who congratulated teachers Van Tran, Janie Malveaux and Jean-Paul Carayon for being selected by their peers as Teachers of the Year for Audubon.

Congratulations also went to students Susan Sullivan and Jeremy Tauriac, selected as ACS representatives for Cox Communication's Hero Award, which is presented to students who have overcome challenges or demonstrated leadership skills.

Dawn and Janice recently attended four days of school improvement training as required by the State Department of Education.

LEAP scores are due May 6, and ELDA testing is complete for students who speak English as a second language.

The 8th graders returned from their trip to Atlanta last night, accompanied by great reports on their behavior and comportment. Chaperones were Janice Malveaux, Jennifer Anderson, Coach Ron Perine and Laurence Lachet. 8th grade graduation is scheduled for May 22 at Tulane.

The French 5th grade is departing for France on May 8 and will return May 20.

III. On a motion from Kenneth Ducote, seconded by Sharon Nossiter, Item 6 on the agenda was moved up. This was a presentation on the lead paint remediation at the Carrollton yard.

Darryl Durham, certified lead supervisor for ACORN Services, Inc., presented his report on the lead in soil assessment at the Carrollton campus, which was occasioned by a parent donating the materials to repaint the portable buildings there. Four sites on the yard were found to have lead in soil hazards. These have been remediated as follows:

Exterior classroom walls had the ground area prepped with 6-mil. plastic, old paint was wet scraped from exterior walls and trim. Exterior walls and trim were primed with Kiltz II primer and painted with lead-free paint.

The ground area of exterior buildings was hepa-vacced to remove loose paint chips. One to two inches of top soil was removed in the playground area and from the drip

line of exterior classrooms, and replaced with two to three inches of new topsoil. An additional 80-90 yards of topsoil was placed on the entire play area.

He suggested that the cleaning staff clean with hepa-vac or similar equipment to eliminate the lead dust hazard, and that they wash with cleaning solution designed to remove lead hazards, such as Shockwave.

Ken Ducote noted the importance of educational information because playgrounds and parks on thoroughfares such as Carrollton were heavily trafficked during the years of leaded gasoline, making the process of hand-washing still very important in developed urban areas.

At this point, the agenda reverted to its usual order, with Mme. Kellermann continuing with the administration report. She congratulated Jean-Paul Carayon for his award and expressed regret that he would not be returning for the next school year. Janice, Dawn and Marie-Claude plan to see off the French students on their trip. She has been contacted by a French family with kindergarten and sixth grade students, who are moving to New Orleans for the coming school year, and there seem to be more French nationals in the program.

IV. Budget Report was given by Budget Committee Chair Laura Watts, who discussed preparations for next year's budget. She reported constraints on the budget that are very significant, given that most of the ACS pre-K program is not funded by MFP – only the gifted and LA4 (free lunch) are subsidized by the state. The general population of preK is funded by our regular budget, and it's having more of an impact as we move forward.

The fund-raising budget for next year is currently \$350,000, which Laura said was unreasonable. She suggested moving forward on an operating budget that is based only on MFP, not federal funding or grants, so that we are not relying on fund-raising for the operating budget.

The school is not in an emergency state today, she said, because of post-Katrina rebuilding funds and grant monies which provide a cash cushion. But this is not sustainable. She expects intense discussions over the summer as we prepare for fall admissions over whether to increase revenues by admitting more students, or reducing costs. She noted the importance of acting as a unified voice with consensus by fall.

Two Budget Committee recommendations were presented to the Board.

1. Funding a full-time director for the French program at a salary level of \$40,000 plus benefits, and engaging with Hynes Charter School to hire a CPA to work with the ACS administration. Total cost of such a hire will be \$70,000 plus benefits to be split 50-50 with Hynes. Hiring of a CPA is a new requirement of BESE.
2. That, when considering the salary of teachers paid by the French government (CRSP), the Board consider the exchange rate twice yearly and supplement those salaries if the exchange rate is unfavorable to the teachers. The supplement will be

in line with the CODOFIL pay scale, up to \$10,000. There will be no penalty if the exchange rate favors the teachers.

Alisa Dupre reported that she had been notified by NOPS that our bill for IT shared services is going to be \$35,000-\$36,000 more than we had budgeted. The initial agreement was figured incorrectly by NOPS. She is in on-going discussions to determine whether we will have to pay this amount, or what we budgeted. This will make an impact on this year's budget, she said.

Board Chairman Carlos Zervigon revisited the last two years of operating a charter school. Our first year, 2006, was a start-up funded in part with one-time federal and private grants. The next year, we doubled our campuses, which also impacts the budget. This year we've had no sudden expansions, although the exact amount of MFP per student is still unknown. Fund-raising should fund such items as enrichment programs, professional development and school trips, not the operating budget, which must be based on MFP. So we have to look at how to eliminate the need for \$350,000 in fund-raising and get our budget straight for 2009-2010. This may mean a reconfiguration of admissions for that year.

Kenneth Ducote moved for acceptance of the Budget Committee recommendation for a French director and CPA; Allen Wood seconded it. There was no public comment, and the motion was approved unanimously.

V. Report on OPSB/Charter School Quarterly Meeting

Carlos reported that the meeting was primarily a presentation for OPSB's upcoming campaign for renewal of millages, which will be on a special ballot in July. OPSB calculates that if the millage is not renewed, it will cost every public school in Orleans Parish \$1,000 per child.

Ken Ducote noted that it is simply a renewal of millage, not an increase or a change in purpose. It was originally passed in 1988 to fund maintenance and asbestos abatement, as well as teacher salaries and benefits, textbooks, supplies and materials.

Carlos said OPSB will supply educational materials for the schools to explain and promote the renewal of the millage.

"Wage an educational campaign," was the phrase used by OPSB, said Janice. It's not an increase in taxes, but a renewal in millage to keep things as they are, because if it doesn't pass, things will get worse.

VI. Sharon Nossiter gave the update on the French high school in the absence of French consul and board member Olivier Brochenin.

An April 16 meeting at the Consulate was attended by representatives of Audubon, Hynes, Ecole Bilingue, Haynes (Jefferson Parish), ISL and the Recovery School District.

Based on meetings of their respective boards and parents, each school spoke of a

desirable way to achieve a successful French program.

Audubon – internationally focused independent high school.

Hynes – implementation of an immersion track within an existing high school as a French curriculum only track would be too small, an assessment agreed upon by all participants at the meeting.

Ecole Bilingue – independent high school with different tracks to include variety of students involved in French and international programs in New Orleans.

ISL – creation of new high school with four tiers: international baccalaureate program, French curriculum program, AP program, general program.

Recovery School District – Betty Jean Wolfe, speaking on behalf of Superintendent Paul Vallas, said RSD plans to open an international school in the Contemporary Arts Center this August with two tracks: international baccalaureate with emphasis on French and Spanish, and a career training program involving the business community. There would be no language requirement for the RSD school. She invited all participants to join a steering committee for the envisaged high school, and strongly encouraged them to consider the RSD school as a potential high school for their students.

Discussion followed. No action was taken.

VII. Appeal of Suspension.

The Board went into executive session at 11:15 a.m., on a motion by Ken Ducote, seconded by Edwin Shorty, to discuss a student's appeal of suspension. The session continued until 12:07 p.m. Ken Ducote proposed reconvening in open session after a five-minute break. The board reconvened in open session at 12:12 p.m.

Edwin Shorty asked that the record show that correspondence received by the board from the interested party had been returned.

Allen Wood moved that the suspension be upheld. He was seconded by Kenneth Ducote. There was no board discussion. A lawyer for the student's family asked the board to reconsider. The board voted unanimously to uphold the suspension.

Ken Ducote moved to adjourn at 12:15 p.m., seconded by Edwin Shorty, unanimous vote.

Minutes prepared by Sharon Nossiter.