

Independence Classical Academy Governing Board

Emergency Board Meeting Sept. 2nd, 2020 6:00PM

MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: Board Members Sandra Crouch, Debbie Kicliter-Kelley, Clay Becton, Cathy Townsend, and Glenda Macon

Others: Principal Courtney Purnell, Registrar Fran Levy, School Administrator Sandy Krischke, Administrative Assistant Kelly Green in attendance via conference call.

The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm by Board President, Clay Becton. Mr. Becton announced the reason for the meeting was primarily to discuss personnel issues that have been bubbling since just prior to school opening and without going into great details it was going to need to be addressed and share with the board some things he has been dealing with on campus and off since the week school started.

Results of the Parent and Employee Surveys were presented and discussion on no policy changes regarding some prior policy decisions ensued. Mask policy seems to be sitting well with approximately 92% of the parents responding to the survey. Discussion item only as a report to the board, no action needed.

Discussion item on personnel matter and potential reorganization of the board. Dr. Purnell contributed that the "district is coming down hard on us regarding certifications and specifically the School Administrator position and lack of an Educational Leadership Certificate." Sandra Crouch thought that this was resolved with the changing of title and how this is still an issue and why. Was the research being conducted to verify if this is or is not an issue. Krischke stated that she had a call into the Florida Accreditation team as well as FDoE for clarification, and that she had hoped to have a report on the 16th, but things have transpired that required this meeting be called-and while she was confident she did not want to assume anything. Mr. Becton suggested that given the recent turn of events-it be blatantly asked if the two leaders of the school could work together or not. Dr. Purnell stated and insisted "she could work with anyone, but had never worked in such a hostile environment as this-that the entire staff was against her and preventing her from doing anything and that all she has been doing is working hours on end for the kids and the mental health situations that have arisen and discipline and getting curriculum in place." Registrar Levy stated that she was insulted and would like a single reference as to her hostility and that all she has done is do a good portion of her job including a master schedule, SIS implementation, IEP work, and more-when her job was to get students registered and handle student life matters-putting in an average of 80 hours per week since before school opened." Purnell stated that she is doing everything on her own from discipline to teacher training to detention duty and on her own outside daily. Krischke reminded her that

there is also only a single or two people inside as well to manage the line, cleaning, students, etc...and that instead of complaining we should be discussing options to improve the campus activities. Sandra Crouch mentioned volunteers and while she understands the delay due to Covid and exposure, is now perhaps the time to open it up to select volunteers to help out in the office/clinic/cafeteria/parent line. Krischke agreed to have Mrs. Chancey pull some forms and make calls to get a schedule going and put out a call to action on social media and schedule a volunteer orientation session to go over rules and procedures. Purnell reminded the board that she needs an ESE specialist to come on board and the need is urgent. Krischke reminded the board that Courtney agreed to take on the role of ESE coordinator back in July to allow more funds for teacher recruitment, and the files were given to her by the Registrar for review. Several requests have been made to clarify allocation of FEFP funds as they relate to ESE students in order to justify the expense, but if we need it we need it. Krischke agreed that our population would likely cover the expense, but that the board should know it is now twice expended, as originally budgeted funds have been reallocated. The board directed Purnell to proceed with trying to find a qualified candidate and report back to the board on the cost and figures-that this position is obviously important enough to find the funds for if the fundraising committee needs to secure it, then so be it. Mrs. Krischke also clarified that absolutely no curriculum has been ordered since the last meeting when the board authorized it and that only a few select PO's have come into her, and all were wrong and not clear-and when asked for clarification, it was never given and not a single PO has been returned or processed. The entire morale on campus has been degraded to teachers vs. staff and an underpinning of superiority has transpired due to only one person on campus having a terminal degree. Discussion ensued on personnel matters. Mrs. Krischke submitted a written statement to board regarding earlier meetings expressing her concerns over grievances that were fraudulent and deceptive to the board chair at the hands of Dr. Purnell. Krischke does not feel the work environment will change without a grave change in attitudes-and that the lies must stop-statements that her faculty are uncomfortable coming to staff, when in fact many are in our offices discussing matters of concern. Cathy Townsend was concerned over the social media blast that was aimed at her, a board member that in fact the Principal reports to, was completely inappropriate and undermining of both her position as a board chair and the school leadership. Dr. Purnell apologized and stated she had deleted social media and was done with all of it. She said she struggled with communicating after being in the virtual world for so long and wanted it to all work out. The conversation was heated, and therefore Mr. Becton interrupted and asked that the issue be addressed quickly and stop the bleeding. He recommends we consider a reorganization of the structure of ICA, as it relates to leadership. It was recommended that we consider a change in leadership structure so that Board members can be me responsible for the happenings at ICA and can address a single person if that is legal. A clarification would need to be made on how and when a reorganization can occur so that one person is responsible for overseeing the school issues are resolved and activities are being conducted properly.

Discussion ensued on how to proceed with the school happenings and board involvement. Mrs. Macon made a motion to proceed with the reorganization and discuss what that looks like moving forward, but Mrs. Kelley disagreed in that more discussion and clarification was needed and that perhaps just more hands on campus was needed, and Dr. Purnell insisted this would violate state statute. Mrs. Krischke stated that the statutes being cited are FL K-20 State Statutes that most are exempt with specific exceptions, by charter schools and that it should be charter school statutes we examine for a response to the dilemma before ICA board. Dr. Purnell asked, "there are statutes only for charter schools?" and it was clarified. After lengthy discussion, Dr. Purnell stated she would be back the following day and the board could let her know who to report to and exited the meeting at 8:02pm.

Board discussion ensued on direction for ICA organization, and the decision to move forward with considering a reorganization was again moved by Mrs. Macon and this time seconded by Mrs. Kelley given the abrupt departure of Dr. Purnell. Further discussion was to have Mrs. Krischke seek clarification on the statute and report back to the board the requirements by the State. Mrs. Krischke indicated that the CSP grant feedback from 2020 was indicative of a lack of clarity between principal and administrator roles and that a delineation was noted also during the charter review meetings. Chair Becton requested a clarification be made and return to the board at the next meeting with report on whether the charter school administrator position (now Director of Operations) needs to be certified and/or a reorganization was required and/or authorized and how to proceed with such a change if it was possible. Board also suggested a follow up on the conversation of curriculum and that if indeed it has not been ordered, to get it ordered asap so teachers can be trained. It was directed by the board that an inquiry of faculty and staff be made to see what they have and do not have and how it can be secured. In addition, it was suggested that we get volunteerism in place to lighten the load on everyone, with selective processes and start getting committee meetings going.

With no further comment or concerns, meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'BW' enclosed in a circle.

