

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of  
Austin International School  
September 10, 2014  
6:30 pm; Adelphi Campus**

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**Board Members Present:** David Arnow, Barksdale English, Sophie Cano, Guillaume Hennion, Ana Barbara Llorente, Dina Sherzer, Liz Wiley

**Absent:** Ricardo Sanchez

**Quorum:** Yes

**Visitors:** Hanifa Smine, PTO president,  
PTO parents: Natalie Anderson, Jessica Hernandez, Kate McCarthy, Philippe Montillet, Marcus Simpson.

**Resources:** Christophe Bonnet, Head of School.

The agenda having been circulated prior to the meeting, the September 10, 2014 meeting of the AIS Board of Directors was called to order at 6:37pm.

**Proceedings – Public Session**

With a quorum present, Barksdale called up the minutes from the regular meeting of August 20, 2014. Ricardo had provided his proxy to Sophie.

Liz moved to approve the amended minutes of August 20, 2014. Sophie seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion passed on a vote of 8-0 with no abstentions and no dissents (with Sophie voting for voting for Ricardo).

**I. HOS Report to Board**

**a. Enrollment**

With new students coming from France, Spain, and Houston AIS will have by mid-November 204 students enrolled representing 130 families. Despite the loss of 10 French students due to relocation and a reduced number of *bourses*, we have a growth of 3% this year, and a retention rate of 92%.

AIS now graduates a full class in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and the first and second grade are very solid.

These results are indicators of positive feelings towards the school.

### **b. Marketing and Communication**

With the two consultants that have been hired, several initiatives are underway to identify strategies to improve the marketability and the visibility of the school.

In order to understand the attitudes of parents who enroll their children in AIS the following questionnaires were devised:

1. A 4 bucket organization included French expats; people who lived in big cities familiar with international schools like AIS; people intellectually minded caring about the mission of the school; and people with high academic standards.
2. A Net Promoter Score that asked "how likely will you recommend AIS was administered." There was a 80% participation with a result of 67%. The score will be run again in Spring and at the end of the school year enabling us a better assessment.

To improve the **visibility** of AIS the marketing team is trying to identify the media in Austin that would give us better exposure.

Another important aspect being worked on is the **messaging** to prospective parents. Receptionists will be trained to tailor their answers according to the callers.

**Reaching out** to other organizations, developing partnerships with other schools is also in progress. The presence of the Russian school on our premises on Sundays is an example of such collaborations.

### **c. Miscellaneous**

#### **Gala Committee**

We already have an enthusiastic group of volunteers eager to contribute. The idea of two circles of volunteers is being considered as it would enable different levels of participation for the preparation of the gala: a core group would take on major planning activities, and a small circle of people who are busy but yet could help just before or during the gala.

It is still undecided whether Christophe will be the main auctioneer or will share the stage with a professional one. The consensus from the people present was that people always look forward to Christophe's performance and that he should not deprive us of this pleasure. Tbd later on. The date for the Gala is Feb.7, 2015 at the Headliners'club.

### **Creating a culture of expectation for AIS students**

This year, before Fifth grade students go to France to celebrate their graduation they will host students from France in Austin and in AIS.

This year an exciting trip will involve 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. They will take a two night astronomy trip in Texas.

Third grade students have a lot to look for.

One of the parents inquired about the availability of some financial help for these trips. Christophe answered that AIS is able to give some help for the plane tickets so that more students can participate.

### **d. Preparations for the opening the Middle School in 2017**

Christophe presented the various priorities/scores that would have to be realized for a successful 2017 opening.

- Ongoing financial and sustainable growth of AIS so that there are 2 classes per grade.
- Improved marketability.
- Updating and tuning the plans for the launching of the MS.
- Transitioning AIS to a more horizontal and distributive structure.
- Developing professional training for the teachers so that they learn collaborative work and perform peer to peer reviews.
- Guiding discussion about the Strategic plan.
- Dealing with the French government.
- Fine tuning the NAIS report. For instance the interaction between PTO and Board should be documented.

### **f. First Quarterly Scorecard Report on the health of the school**

Various results were commented on, such as the positive financial situation, the healthy participation at school events, the result of the parent

surveys. More prospective parents attended the open houses. One parent suggested that in addition to having open houses on site, AIS put a video on line with the information that is offered during a visit to the school, and with interview with parents.

Barksdale suggested that with input from Christophe the Board look at the objectives so that we have tracking information that we can evaluate.

## **II. Board Report**

### **a. Vice Chair report on continuing education**

Liz attended a seminar on non- profits as part of compulsory continuing education required for lawyers.

She reported on the various areas that need attention in the school:

- Gift policies
- D&O policies (Directors and officers liability Insurance)
- TABC licensing to serve alcohol
- Document Retention policies
- Copyright, trademark for our logo

### **b. Committee Reports**

#### Finance

Ana Barbara explained the role of the finance committee and its goals for 2014-2015. She proposes to create standard procedures, to work with the audit committee and the AIS accountant, and to provide training to the Board.

#### Governance

Ricardo and Sophie are the committee with Barksdale and Christopher ex-officio. This year's tasks are: recruitment of 3 new members, creation of orientation procedures for new members, codification of the Manual to comply with NAIS.

Sophie should tell the Board what she needs.

#### Audit

David explained that the goal of this committee is to fulfill the Board fiduciary mission. It will codify procedures for the future. The audit for this year will be ready early November.

#### Strategic Planning

Ricardo, Christophe and Liz will work on it. Right now since we are in the planning and drafting stage, each board member has been asked to propose a SWOT analysis. Faculty and staff will be consulted as well.

Advancement and marketing  
(See Christophe's presentation in the HOS section above). Guillaume offered to look at the data to provide an input as well.

### III. PTO President's Report

The president listed the three areas the PTO plans to work on:  
Fundraising, bringing community together, providing support for parents.

The various activities for fundraising included a bakery sale that was successful last year, the sale of T-shirts and calendars and uniform trades.

Various Community services will continue such as Austin Clean up, Teacher's appreciation, International potluck, fun run. In addition there will be a committee to welcome and help the new teachers to get oriented in AIS and in Austin, a car pooling committee, and a global ordering of school supplies. AIS PTO could be designated as a charity when ordering supplies on Amazon by clicking on AmazonSmile.

The landscaping project planned last year was realized this year with 50 people who came to help.

The PTO treasurer distributed the Budget Plan for 2014-2015. In the future he will use the same program as the AIS accountant

The next PTO meeting will take place October 8, 2014 at 5:30.

There being no further business before the Board the public proceedings concluded at 8:57 PM

**Approved on October 8, 2014**

**Signed:**

*Dina Sherzer*