

Idaho Connects Online School
Governing Board Meeting Minutes

Idaho Virtual Education Partners
Idaho Connects Online School Board of Directors
Friday, January 10, 2020
2:00 PM MT
5680 E Franklin Road Nampa, Idaho 83687

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
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I. Call to Order – Presiding, Chairman High

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 PM MT. Trustee Reents, Trustee McMahon, Trustee Loome, Business Manager Dorian Bell, Alex Tijerina and Head of School Vickie McCullough were in attendance.

Approval of Agenda - Chairman High

Trustee McMahon brought forth a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Trustee Loome gave the second with all in favor and the motion was passed.

Review and Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Trustee Reents brought forth a motion to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Trustee McMahon gave the second with all in favor and the motion was passed.

Old Business - Chairman High

Chairman High called for discussion on any old Board business. No old business was brought forth.

II. Public Comment

The floor was opened for public comment. No one brought forth any comment to share.

III. Reports and Discussions

A. Director’s Report – Chairman High

None at this time.

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B. Head of School Report to be combined with Discussion Items-Vickie McCullough

The HOS shared several items with the Board.

1. ICON now has a partnership with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, United Way and Albertson's to provide food boxes, hygiene boxes, "daily-living" boxes and Christmas items for students or staff in need. ICON has had a noted increase in trauma amongst both our staff and student body and for the first time, can respond to those needs by way of these items. The HOS has been able to collect enough items to create in-house food and hygiene pantries to help meet the ongoing needs and requests of our school community for auxiliary services in a timely fashion. This new initiative has been met with great support from the school community.
2. The HOS spoke on the current state of Idaho's Charter Commission. The HOS informed the Board of recent departures of the Charter Commission staff due to the challenges created by the Commission's Open Meeting Law violation back in April, 2019. The HOS informed the Board that two of the commission's three staffers, as well as the Director had departed. The HOS informed the Board of the Commission's formation of 2 committees and the issues those committees identified through "listening sessions". The HOS informed the Board of an upcoming public input session in February should the Board want to attend. The HOS notified the Board that the Charter School performance certificate renewals were on hold, since the requirements may change pending the findings of the committee.
3. The HOS notified the Board that she was approached by the State Department of Education regarding the SDE's Migrant Students program. The HOS informed the Board that due to reorganization of the SDE's Migrant Program under the SDE's Federal Programs department she met with representatives from both the Migrant Program as well as the Federal Programs group and as a result of the meeting the SDE wants to partner with ICON in terms of our treatment facility initiatives, since both our Migrant program and our treatment program were built upon the same model. The SDE has had problems tracking students entering and leaving treatment facilities. The HOS informed the Board that ICON has been requested by the SDE to attend and participate in workshops entitled, "Credit Recovery for Highly Mobile and Vulnerable Students" in conjunction with the SDE's Migrant and Federal programs groups. The HOS stated that the goal was not to become the State's only choice, but to provide a program that other virtual schools throughout the state can replicate if they so choose. The first conference is to be held sometime in February. The HOS informed the Board that the SDE is offering to hire and pay for a Migrant Program Liaison to work for ICON to help reach out to the migrant population.

C. Discussion Items

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Chairman High began the discussion/brainstorming session regarding the Improvement of ICON's Student Performance and Achievement on the State Standardized Test by recalling the Proficiency data provided by the HOS from ICON's previous school year, specifically ICON's math proficiency results (11% vs. the state average of 45%).

In response to Trustee McMahon, the HOS stated that ICON's 6th, 7th, 8th and 10th grade students are required to take the State's proficiency exams. The HOS explained that while we are provided with individual student scores, it is unclear how the State utilizes those scores in relation to ICON's proficiency evaluations.

Chairman High outlined the three areas he wanted to focus on during the brainstorming session:

1. Proficiency rates
2. Graduation rates
3. Turnover rate

Chairman High continued by revisiting the initiatives currently being investigated by the HOS to help improve ICON's test results. Chairman High stated his belief that every year we go through the same situation with results that don't seem adequate. His belief is there might be something fundamentally wrong with the program and would like to have out-of-the-box ideas, provided by someone with expertise to assist the Board to address these areas.

The HOS provided the Board with a handout detailing Idaho's Standard Achievement Tests. The HOS explained the ISATs and some of the challenges schools are faced with, such as the lack incentive for students to perform well on these assessments as demonstrating proficiency on the assessments is no longer a graduation requirement; the assessments are only administered once a year and within a specific timeframe; the assessments must be taken in person at a location with a trained proctor; the assessments must be taken on equipment and software provided by the school. The HOS also detailed the various stages and requirements of each of the assessments.

In response to Trustee Reents, the HOS explained that each school is responsible for providing their own locations.

In response to Chairman High, the HOS listed the various places ICON gave assessments.

In response to Trustee Loome, the HOS informed the Board that ICON employs a state testing coordinator.

The HOS detailed the difference between how a traditional school has the flexibility to address the time needed for a student to have multiple testing opportunities to complete the assessments vs the all-in-one scheduling that ICON's students usually opt for.

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Trustee Loomer inquired if ICON has the ability to impose a testing schedule with multiple segments as opposed to allowing students to take all their assessments at once. The HOS provided the Board with the reasoning behind historically allowing ICON's students to test all at once.

After continued discussion on last year's Math Proficiency results, The HOS noted her displeasure at being accused of making excuses and yielded the floor to the Board to provide their solutions to the issue.

Chairman High stated that he had learned much about the tests and the problems with them that he did not know prior to this meeting and thanked the HOS for her presentation. Chairman High acknowledged there are issues with how we're measured and asked the Board what should be done going forward.

Chairman High stated at the last meeting the Board voted to have the HOS pursue the testing center strategy proposed by the HOS. The HOS acknowledged that she is already working on implementing the new strategy.

Chairman High restated his position that the Board needs to bring in outside experts to help ICON. Chairman High mentioned that the school's turnover rate and student contact may be factors that are impacting a lot of things that an outside expert may help ICON address. The HOS responded that she has contacted an outside expert regarding potentially becoming a consultant for ICON and that she would continue to pursue it if the Board wanted.

The Board spoke about the approach implemented at the direction of a previous outside consultant to separate the student population into the general school and the alternative school. Trustee McMahon asked if this approach is still applicable. The HOS replied that this was the conclusion of the Board to utilize this approach, and that each ICON school is evaluated by the State separately. The HOS noted that the HOS and the teaching staff are currently reviewing ICON's curriculum to make sure grade level expectations in the assessments are being addressed. The HOS pointed out the State has our alternative and general schools ranked 236 and 353 respectively, out of 652 Idaho schools.

The HOS spoke of the plan to further expand the Personalized Learning Program to all ICON students. The HOS further detailed the other areas being evaluated, such as curriculum rigor, which has been approved through the accreditation process, staff education and training, and vertical alignment in curriculum from grade level to grade level.

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Trustee Loomer asked if ICON was able to only enroll students at the beginning of the year. The HOS replied that because we are a public school, the State of Idaho mandates we must allow enrollment throughout the school year.

Trustee Reents acknowledged the value of providing education to treatment center and migrant students who may only attend ICON for brief periods and that we should continue offer education to these students, with full knowledge that in doing so, it would hurt the school's performance ratings. Trustee Loomer agreed but said that the school still has to have a metric that is assessed.

Trustee Reents suggested that the Board look at a direct comparison of ICON to other virtual schools.

Trustee Loomer suggested that the problem may be with our virtual model and the solution may be to have the students attend in person part of the week, have video conferences or to have higher teacher/student interaction.

The Chairman suggested student motivation may be an issue and that there is probably a motivational expert in the education field that could help ICON discover and implement ways to motivate students online.

Trustee Loomer suggested imposing a rule to move-on students that do not engage within a week or attend for a full 6 hours a day and questioned if the reason we are not doing this is to have a higher student population.

The HOS offered to bring in someone to speak to the Board on students of trauma and how that impacts the way ICON schools. Chairman High agreed that it would be beneficial and may be a solution to part of the problem.

The HOS recommended that the Board revisit the mission and vision in ICON's charter beforehand as it had been suggested that the Board may not have confidence in the school's model. Chairman High agreed that this topic should be part of the extended session.

Trustee McMahon revisited the data provided by the HOS in the last Board meeting regarding student time allocation and time of attendance. Trustee McMahon suggested that since the teachers are stakeholders in any changes the Board might make, they should attend the extended session as well to share how they feel about ICON's performance ratings.

Trustee Reents suggested proposing a motion of a further examination of ICON's mission and vision and a one-day meeting, bringing in an outside expert to give perspective to the Board. Trustee Loomer suggested the meeting address the substantive changes that will impact the education ICON provides and ICON's scores,

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further stating that she believed it to be a competence issue. Trustee Reents stated that the scores misrepresent ICON's strength.

Trustee Reents asked if the Chairman and the HOS would be willing to put together a plan, get the necessary resources and schedule the extended session with the goal of having the ability to make informed next-step decisions by the end of the session.

Chairman High made several suggestions for expert speakers. ICON's Senior teachers, some of the members who had recently left the Charter Commission, Don Reading and Marilyn Howard (former Superintendent of Public Instruction). The Chairman further suggested that the Board and the HOS submit suggestions in order to produce a list of resources so that the Board can collectively decide who to bring in.

Trustee Reents brought forth a motion that the HOS and Chairman High put together a plan for a 6 hour retreat session to deal with the key measurement and vision issues that have been discussed in this Board meeting and that the agenda for the retreat be circulated in advance for Board comment and approval. Trustee McMahon gave the second. Chairman High opened the floor for continued discussion.

Trustee McMahon wanted to add to the proposed agenda for the meeting finding out if there are any success stories from other Idaho charter schools that may be performing well on the standardized tests and how and if we can emulate them.

Trustee Loomer suggested looking at mandating new students attend in-person for the first month to help them transition to a fully virtual situation. Trustee Loomer also suggested that ICON track teacher interaction vs test scores to show that as test scores decrease, teacher contact increases. Trustee Loomer also suggested bringing in content in the areas of robotics and Artificial Intelligence, increasing video conferencing and group course activities.

Trustee Loomer also wanted the Board to consider ending the relationships with the treatment centers while increasing general enrollment in the Treasure Valley. Trustee Loomer expressed that our general enrollment has not increased and suggested that ICON's per-student expenditure is too costly.

Trustee Loomer also suggested the school perform parent surveys and entrance and exit surveys.

Trustee Loomer stated that ICON should continue to segment the alternative school and the general school and expressed concern over continued efforts toward the State's Migrant Student Program, saying that it is diluting ICON and that ICON must demonstrate its ability to do our core competency. Trustee Loomer pointed out that other measures of success are not the standard ICON is judged by and the Board has not been provided any other metrics of academic success. Trustee Loomer requested

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additional performance data, outside the ISAT proficiency results, for the Board to consider.

Trustee Loome also suggested that the Board explore how to address the situation for those students who do not have actively involved parents.

In response to Trustee Loome, the HOS informed the Board that 100% of ICON's parents participate in conferences. Trustee Loome requested any additional metrics that support ICON's academic success so the Board can better be mentors and sounding boards to the community about ICON.

In response to Chairman High, Trustee Loome provided several suggestions for outside experts such as; the Superintendent of a brick and mortar school to educate the Board of the standard model of education; someone from a charter school organization; someone from the Albertson Foundation; and someone who was recently recommended to her who has performed several studies in Oregon.

Chairman High stated that the Board should be able to come away from the retreat with an approach to solving ICON's issues.

Trustee Reents called for a vote on the measure as follows:

The HOS and Chairman High put together an agenda for a 6 hour retreat session to deal with the key measurement and vision issues that have been discussed in this Board meeting, with outside experts to speak to each identified issue. That the HOS and Chairman High circulate a list of proposed experts that can speak to the issues identified for any additions or comments from the Board and that the agenda for the retreat be circulated in advance for Board comment and approval.

The motion passed with all in favor.

a. Business Manager's Report – Dorian Bell

Mr. Bell addressed the preparation of this year's filing of IRS form 990 for Idaho Virtual Education Partners.

Trustee Reents brought forth a motion to approve form 990 as prepared by the audit firm and presented by ICON's Business Manager. Trustee McMahon seconded the motion with all in favor and the motion passed.

Chairman High opened the floor to any questions. In response to Trustee Reents, Mr. Bell replied that there was not any notable variance from previous filings.

In response to Trustee Reents, Mr. Bell informed the Board of the amount charged for the preparation of the 990 form. Mr. Bell informed the Board that he is in process of

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getting proposals from other auditors per the Boards previous instruction and asked if the Board wished him to continue.

Chairman High asked if there was other business the Board wanted to discuss. Trustee Loomer asked if Mr. Bell would include a review of Brick and Mortar schools for next years HOS salary review. Mr. Bell agreed to provide the information in future HOS salary reviews.

Trustee Loomer called for a motion to include the size of each comparison school's student population in the future HOS salary reviews. The motion passed with all in favor.

IV. Business (Action Items)

Trustee Reents requested to be copied on the school Counselor's newsletter.

Trustee Loomer asked if the HOS would inform the Board when the Boise regional sessions are to take place.

Trustee Loomer requested additional performance data, outside the ISAT proficiency results, for the Board to consider.

Trustee Reents brought forth a motion that the HOS and Chairman High put together an agenda for a 6 hour retreat session to deal with the key measurement and vision issues that have been discussed in this Board meeting, with outside experts to speak to each identified issue. That the HOS and Chairman High circulate a list of proposed experts that can speak to the issues identified for any additions or comments from the Board and that the agenda for the retreat be circulated in advance for Board comment and approval. Trustee McMahon gave the second and the motion passed with all in favor.

Trustee Reents brought forth a motion to approve form 990 as prepared by the audit firm and presented by ICON's Business Manager. Trustee McMahon seconded the motion with all in favor and the motion passed.

Trustee Loomer called for a motion to include the size of each comparison school's student population in the future HOS salary reviews. The motion passed with all in favor.

V. Adjournment

Trustee Reents entered the first motion to adjourn with a second by Trustee McMahon. The motion carried and meeting was adjourned at 4:47 PM.

Minutes Approved by the Board of Directors on 3/7/2020.