

Minutes of the 2009-2010 HIS Executive Board Meeting #9
March 30, 2010 (Tuesday) at HIS at 18:00

Members present: Ikeda, Kaufman, Lyons, Midorikawa, Branson, Viljoen, Wood, Yonesaka

Guests present: Barry Ratzliff (Deputy Headmaster); Dr. Toma (HIS Auditor);

Guests present during discussion: Sapporo City representatives Mr. Kawakami & Mr. Nakata

1. Call meeting to order: Viljoen called the meeting to order at 18:01.

2. Brief meeting with Sapporo City representatives regarding the purchase of the campus land.

Mr. Kawakami and Mr. Nakata explained the reasoning behind the four main points of the City's renegotiated offer. Subsequent questions and discussion clarified the following points:

PRICE: Sapporo City cannot offer any further reduction (below 1/3 off market value) on the land, first because there is no precedent, and second because any offer below that could have negative repercussions. The land has been reassessed at ¥310,000,000, so the offered price, ¥207,000,000, represents a 1/3 discount. This assessment includes an estimate of depreciation in land value through July 2010, so there would be no further reduction in value, even if Sapporo land prices continue to depreciate.

AREA: After the snow melts, the City will survey the land again. However, the present land survey by the City is fairly recent, so any change in the official size is expected to be negligible.

RENT-FREE LEASE: The proposed half-year extension (until the end of November 2010) to the rent-free lease will be the last one offered. The purpose is to give HIS time to take care of paperwork to buy the land.

PROCESS: Sapporo City wants the board to make a decision tonight and contact them the following morning (March 31, 2010). The City would like a copy of these minutes.

The Board thanked Mr. Kawakami & Mr. Nakata for their time.

2a. Presentation from Peggy Shibuya, IPC Coordinator: Tabled.

3. Approve agenda (2010.3.30_1.agenda ExB.pdf) (Confirm most important items for us this evening.)
A report on communication with HuPA (under #20) was added. The agenda was approved.

4. Approve and sign minutes of February 15 meeting (2010.3.30_2 2010Feb15_minutes.pdf)
Minutes of February 15 meeting were approved and signed.

5. Matters/ discussion arising out of the minutes: None

6. Chairperson's report (2010.3.30_3.Chair ExB.pdf)

The Chairperson's report noted how far HIS has come in the past twenty years, with many immediate goals in the process of being realized by October 2010: owning our own land, running a satellite school in Niseko, having a designated Head of School, multi-age classes, six-year accreditation, and others. Board decisions will continue to affect HIS for the next 20 years, so we must continue to work hard together to meet our goals as well as our vision for HIS in 20 years time.

7. Brief presentation on Board policies & School policies (Fourth ExB goal for this year: Review and update Executive Board policies.)

Viljoen reported on a 2009 EARCOS session on setting, revising and streamlining board policy to 7 or 8 pages. These policies should be strategic, wide-focused, measurable, and easy to grasp. Administrators should be able to operationalize them through handbooks developed by different committees.

Follow-up discussion focused on the vision of the school. HIS has evolved into an academic school that includes a strong focus in Arts and Outdoor Education, areas inherently accessible to ELL students. The Executive Board affirmed that these two distinctive emphases are what HIS is about now and what HIS desires to emphasize in the future.

Discussion then centered on the process needed to define and articulate this vision at this critical time in the school's history. A vision statement of 4-5 words (or motto) would allow HIS to create a brand-image that would in turn influence hiring, advertising, and PR. One example of such a motto would be "Academics on Stage: One School, Two Experiences". Students will be tapped for other examples.

8. Head of School's report (2010.2.15_4.HMreport.pdf)

Enrollment: HIS currently has 189 students.

Finances: The 2010-2011 budget is being prepared with revenue and expenses held constant.

Personnel: Hiring is in great flux right now. Maria Renee Gamarra has been hired for the K/1 position. The

ELL teacher's position is still open. Yuya Hisada has been hired for the IT position (systems, server, PC labs, PowerSchool admin), starting April in order to have an overlap with Matt Greenway.

Curriculum: HIS sent four teachers to the IPC conference in Singapore. Professional development in 2010 will include IPC in September (IPC), Bambi Betts in October (assessment), Susan Zimmerman in January (reading).

School Improvement: The Headmaster's work in helping to accredit Chengdu International School reminds us of creative ways of strengthening HIS without being overly costly.

Building and Grounds: New teachers will be brought into the teacherage for 2010-2011. With the Morrison's leaving, HIS will give up the lease on the house.

Marketing: Kaufman is working on a Beer and Food Festival in June for student scholarships. The relationship between scholarships and the Endowment Fund is still unclear to many in the community.

Niseko: Ratzliff, Wood and Branson toured the new site. The Executive Board needs to determine HIS' capacity to engage in the project.

Strategic Plan: John Ritter's visit provided a wealth of information about our current school dispositions.

Technology: The website is being contracted out to a third-party.

Student Issues: In response to a parent concern about Habitat for Humanity, the board confirmed that HIS does not pay ransom if students are kidnapped.

School Safety and Health: Sarah Branson handled a pre-Spring Break outbreak of the mumps. Many students are not immunized. An immunization policy (that is enforced) at admissions might be considered.

9. Treasurer's report

With fewer students, educational cuts have increased. Branson continues to propose a 3% tuition but insists that if we don't raise tuition more than this there will be problems later.

10. Auditor's report

The CIF is now at 10.5 million dollars. Dr. Toma has relayed HIS' desire to buy the land on which "Tanpopo" now sits if there is an opportunity. "Tanpopo" will tell HIS first if they decide to move to a different site.

A. Decisions needed / desired

11. Niseko satellite school

Following a visit to Niseko, Wood and Branson explained that the school area would be 200 sq meters—about 3 classrooms—inside a visitors' center. At this point, we are waiting for a response from the developers' Board. There is a small core group of parents in Niseko hoping that HIS will begin a program. One important element will be summer and winter programs, starting in December 2011, with sports education outsourced. The Board re-affirmed its desire to continue working towards a Niseko satellite school.

12. Purchase / lease of the school land from the City of Sapporo

- a) Decision re final Sapporo City offer (2010.3.30_5 HIS-Sapporo Lease Contract.pdf; 2010.3.30_6 MeetingSapporoCity (Mar15).pdf)
- b) Decision re buying outright from Harris Fund or using JP Bank loans

Viljoen moved, Wood seconded, that the Board accept the City's contract for rent-free land use from April 1, 2010 to November 30, 2010. Motion was unanimously approved.

Branson moved, Viljoen seconded, that HIS purchase the land from the City for 207,000,000 yen paid for by a one-time withdraw from the Harris Account at such a time to meet the City of Sapporo deadline and for the best possible exchange rate.

Detailed discussion followed. Arguments for buying directly using the Harris Fund included: not leaving a debt or possible problems for future HIS constituents, the Japanese cultural inclination to avoid loans in general, and the fact that the CIF is earmarked for such capital expenditures. The argument for using a bank loan was that substantial savings would likely result because the CIF growth is higher than bank loan interest rates and that the Board's mandate to be a good steward implies choosing the less costly way.

Branson moved that "paid for by a one-time withdraw from the Harris Account" be struck out so that the motion reads:

Branson moved, Lyons seconded, that HIS purchase the land from the City for 207,000,000 yen at such a time to meet the City of Sapporo deadline and for the best possible exchange rate. Motion was unanimously approved.

Kaufman and Wood will continue to work with various banks to get more detailed information before the next meeting. The board feels that we need expert confirmation by someone who is versed in investment to ensure that our data is complete and accurate.

13. Approve teacher contracts: Branson is working on contracts and job descriptions.

14. Adopt one “unified” action plan: Tabled.

B. Items to be discussed/ reviewed

15. Head succession/ head search: Report (2010.3.30_7 Ritter Report - Head Selection Methods.pdf; 2010.3.30_8 HIS Head Search letter to community.pdf)

Viljoen detailed the progress of the Search Committee to clearly and critically evaluate candidates. The Board will interview Barry Ratzliff, the only candidate from within the HIS community, on April 13 at 18:00. A contract has been made with John Ritter to be involved as consultant until the end of the process.

16. New teachers – Hiring and Orientation: See Head Report

17. Fundraising auction (February 26) – brief review

A subcommittee to work on future auctions and fundraising will be set in September.

18. Curriculum development, implementation and assessment

Good progress has been made in Language Arts.

19. Review of policies – members of sub-committee

Lyons, Yonesaka and Viljoen will be on a sub-committee to review board policies over the next few months.

20. Communication: School – Parents; & Communication: School – Board

Wood met with HuPA members (Hide Kurosawa, Kristin Dixit, Cindy Edwards) to report on an extensive project on improving communication structures. They discussed the lack of HuPA mandate and structure, the necessity of teachers’ buy-in, and the possibility of copying part of the Japanese PTA system. Organization needs to be in place for the first day of the 2010 academic year.

Yonesaka, Wood, Ikeda, and Yonesaka will meet with HuPA before the next Board meeting.

C. Possible items for discussion today

C-1 Progress on New Building Extension evaluation [New Building Extension Committee] Tabled.

C-2 School activity assessment: Tabled.

C-3 HuPA policy: See 20 above.

D. Items for consideration in the future

D-1 2009-2010 Board Calendar ongoing review – are we on track?

D-2 Teacherage viability

D-3 Kitara Concert Review

D-4 Budget needs to be approved by April meeting

D-5 Board self-appraisal to be done in May

21. Review of meeting:

Although the meeting was long, there was good discussion and very important decisions were reached.

22. Time and Place of next meetings:

Wednesday, April 28, at 18:00.

Board of Councilors: May 24 (Monday) at 19:00

Executive Board: May 24 (Monday) at 17:00

23. Adjourn meeting: Viljoen adjourned the meeting at 21:33.

Item for HEx:

At the Executive Board meeting of March 30, 2010, the Board reached several critical decisions. First, after many, many months of careful discussion and negotiation, the Board has reached an agreement with the City of Sapporo to buy the land upon which the school now sits. The land will be purchased at 2/3 of its appraised value. Our rent-free lease has been extended until November 30, 2010 to enable us to complete the process. Owning our own school on our own land demonstrates that Hokkaido International School has truly come of age as a full-fledged institution.

In addition, the Board reaffirmed its goal of establishing a satellite school in Niseko and articulated its vision of HIS as an academic institution with a strong emphasis in the arts and in outdoor education. The Board believes that all of these decisions truly reflect what Hokkaido International School is and what it hopes to become.

For reference:

Standing Committees (Four committees required by by-law, first person listed is chair)

- a. Finance Committee (Midorikawa, Branson, Shalfeieff) Need to co-opt other members
- b. Future Planning Committee [School Improvement Committee] (Ratzliff, Branson, Viljoen, Yonesaka, K. Katayama, M. Greenway, B. Greenway, Shibuya, Piazza, ?students)
- c. Personnel and Curriculum Committee (Viljoen, Branson)
- d. Buildings and Grounds Committee (Branson, Ikeda, Lyons)

Other Committees (First person listed is chair)

- f. Fund Raising and Marketing Committee (Kaufman, Branson, Riggins)
- g. Tuition Assistance Committee (Branson, Viljoen, Lyons)
- h. Board Nominating Committee (K. Riggins, Branson, Mitarai)
- i. New Building Extension Committee (Kaufman, Branson, Ikeda, Piazza, Sugino)
- j. Teacherage Committee (Branson, Kaufman, Ogawa)

Executive Board Goals for 2009-2010

1. Ensure that teachers develop a language arts curriculum that aligns agreed standards, assessment, and instructional practice.
2. Raise the HIS community's awareness that the alignment of activities with the school's mission statement and curriculum is a priority.
3. Examine and create contingencies for future HIS facilities.
4. Review and update Executive Board policies.
5. Investigate the possibility of starting a satellite school in Niseko

HIS Mission Statement

Hokkaido International School will nurture inquisitive, creative learners for compassionate stewardship of an ever-changing world by providing a university preparatory program, within an English language environment.

Minutes by Yonesaka (3/31/2010)

Proofread by Viljoen (4/01/2010)