

**AISB BOARD MEETING**  
**Regular Session**  
**AISB Library**  
**April 21, 2009**

**Present:** David Henry (DH, *Director*) Rob Van Doeselaar (RD, *Chair*), Omar Saibou (OS), Scott Reese (SR, *U.S. Ambassador's rep*), Christy Bennett (CB), Steve Lutterbeck (SL), Olivier Verstraeten (OV), and Magnus Bucht (MB)

**Absent:** Todd League (TL)

**Others present:** Randy Brown (RB, project manager), and Lynn Robinson (LR, teacher's rep.). Three parents were present, Iris Berfelo, Esther Bakker and Fred Rattunde.

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### **1. Opening**

#### **a. Call to order at 7:15 PM**

RD opened the meeting at 7:15pm and everyone present introduced themselves.

#### **b. Approval of minutes**

A motion was made by RD to approve the minutes of the Regular Session March 17, 2009, seconded by OV and approved by all.

### **2. Teacher's report**

LR reported on recently-concluded activities, namely:

- The AISB International Festival organized by the PTO and held on March 28, was a great success,
- The annual Science Fair which covered the week of March 23 – 26 and culminated with a public viewing on Thursday, March 26<sup>rd</sup>,
- The AISB Middle School competed in the WAISAL Middle School Soccer Tournament in Ouagadougou March 20 – 22 and won all its games, becoming the champions of the event,
- Session 3 of AISB afterschool activities ended on April 2 and the new session began on April 20,
- The report cards for this quarter went home on April 3 and the parent/teacher conferences took place 2 weeks later on April 17

LR also gave an overview of upcoming activities/events, such as:

- The AISB High School Global Initiatives trip to the International School of Dakar,
- High School Global Initiatives Network trip to Dakar, Senegal,
- The AISB High School is actively preparing its participation in the WAISAL High School Volley Ball Tournament in Dakar, Senegal, May 16 – 17,
- Preparations actively under way for the annual AISB Graduation ceremony, which will be held at the Hotel Salam on June 12, 2009

### **3. Director's report (by DH)**

(See handout 'Highlights of Director's Report' April 21, 2009).

In addition, DH provided the following information:

- Summer construction has begun in the Upper School. No disruption to classroom or school work,

- Enrollment stands at 165 as of April 21. Projections for next year (2009 – 2010) puts it at 161, but this does not include the usual unknown guess of new students that might show up close to the beginning of the school year,
- Next year's supplies have been ordered and all seem to be going well,
- The AISB Board annual seminar is scheduled for May 16 & 17, the trainer ready to go and the syllabus drafted. However, the choice of location has not been finalized yet
- The Professional Development for teachers will take place in August during the in-service week. When planning for PD at the beginning of next year, the areas of focus jointly identified by teachers and administration were: ESL, Assessment, and Differentiation. The Leadership Team decided to focus on ESL with a tie-in to Differentiation. They have scheduled Christine Palumbo to come in August 17-19. DH also indicated that he has also sent an email to the heads of other schools in the region who might be interested in using Christine while she is in the region and sharing cost,
- DH met with the Director of the Bamako Christian Academy (BCA) to explore different scenarios for bringing some BCA high school students to AISB in the long run. However, BCA is not interested at this moment,
- Gary Holsten, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher, is currently in Casablanca, Morocco, as part of an accreditation team of Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools,
- DH gave a brief description of AISB's Internal Storage System for Curriculum Documents which included a demonstration of the webpages which store the curriculum documents. Randy Brown used to maintain the system which is now in the hands of Yaa Obeng, the Secondary School technology person. Some of the contents of this system will ultimately be published on the school's website as originally planned.

#### **4. Facilities committee report (by CB)**

- The OPIC loan application was submitted on March 19 and the school has since received a good feedback from the person in charge of that file at OPIC. Following OPIC procedures, we should know on April 30 whether we have made it through the first phase of screening. If yes, we will await the final decision on the loan to be announced at the end of June. If not, there is still an opportunity to make corrections and resubmit,
- The construction bids were open on March 27 in the presence of the 8 (out 10 that were invited to bid) construction companies that had bid. Also present were RD, CB, RB, TL, DH and representatives from OFETEC and Pyramidion. The winner, COMATEXIBAT, is one of the largest construction companies in Mali. The construction contract was awarded on April 15 and signed on April 17. Construction has already begun,
- A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for May 30 at 9am. RB is working on the guest list and is accepting suggestions of names. A brief discussion ensued on who should be invited: ministers? The Governor? The Mayor? Should we keep this event small and then make the opening of the completed school the bigger event? In the end, it was agreed to let the Facilities Committee examine this and decide,
- RB is leaving at the end of July, back to his former position in Vermont. To replace him, the Administration looked into the list of applicants for the Business Manager position. The Board ruled that out because it thought the person needed more of a construction, rather than business, background. In the end, it was decided to let the Facilities Committee draft a job description and decide if and where to advertise for this position.

## **5. Finance Committee Report (by OV)**

See handouts 'Finance Committee Meeting March 17, 2009',  
'2008 – 09 AISB Budget with New Construction',  
'Proposed Revised 2008 – 09 Budget for April', and  
'Final Draft: 2009 – 10 AISB Budget with New Construction',  
'Proposed Tuition Fees 2009 – 10 – Final Draft'

- OV presented the original (March 09) and proposed revised 2008 – 09 AISB budgets with the new construction costs taken into account. The only difference between these 2 budgets is the transfer of \$220,000 to the Reserves, resulting in a surplus of -\$52,000 for the year. The designated reserves are projected to reach \$750,000 at the end of this year.

A motion was then made (by OV) to approve the revised budget for 2008 – 09, seconded by OS, and approved by all present

- OV then gave a detailed presentation of the 2009 – 10 AISB budget with the new construction costs included. The major change from the previous budget concerns the Dollar-to-CFA exchange rate, which goes from 450 to 500.

A motion was made (by OV) to approve the 2009 – 10 budget, seconded by RD, and approved by all

- Relevant to the budget discussion was a presentation of the proposed changes in tuition & fees for 2009 – 10. With a look at the trend of past annual tuition increases (3 – 4%) and at the state of our finances, the Finance Committee is proposing a reduction in rate of tuition increase from the 5% originally proposed in March. Thus, there will be no tuition increase for PreK4, and tuition will only increase by \$550 (3.7%) for K – 5 and \$650 (4.1%) for grades 6 - 12.

There was, however, slight increases in some fees that AISB charges parents for various services, namely one-time registration by \$50, transportation fees by \$500 and ESOL fees by \$1000..

A motion was made (by OV) to approve the changes in tuition and fees, seconded by RD, and approved by all

- Update on the construction loan:
  - total amount borrowed from Ecobank: 550 million CFA Francs
  - 1<sup>st</sup> release: 230 million on May 8
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> release: 320 million on August 7
  - Condition: AISB to deposit all tuition paid in CFA in ECOBANK account
  - no penalty on earlier-than-scheduled payback
  - tax exoneration still an issue
- The audit for 2007 – 08 went well and only generated 2 comments/recommendations for improvement: the inventory summary sheet for auditors (which is being worked on by the Administrative Assistant) and the Business Manual (DH is keeping the Finance Committee updated on the progress being made on this).  
A motion was made (by OV) to approve the Final 2007 – 08 Audit, seconded by RD, and approved by all. SL recommended including a Management Comments section in future audits.

## **6. Policy committee report (by RD)**

(See handouts 'Policy Committee Meeting, April 14, 2009')

The latest work of the Policy Committee consisted mostly in amending a few policies in order to maintain consistency with others in the Policy Handbook, namely:

- Policy # 601: the phrase **‘with the approval of the Board’** was deleted out of the last sentence,
- Policy # 602: the word **‘must’** was replaced by **‘may be required to’** in the second sentence and the word **‘Board’** was replaced by **‘Director’** in the second to last sentence,
- Policy # 918: the word **‘should’** was replaced by **‘must’** and **‘Board of Directors’** by **‘Director’**, all in the first sentence,
- Policy # 918.1: the word **‘Board of Directors’** was replaced by **‘Director’** in the third sentence of the policy,
- Policy # 1005, second paragraph the word: **‘should’** was replaced by **‘must’** in the first and second sentence, and **‘Board of Directors’** by **‘Director’** in the first sentence,
- Policy # 304.6: the phrase **‘additional two-year extensions’** was replaced by **‘an extension of one or two additional years’**.

A motion to approve all these changes was introduced by SL, seconded by OV, and approved by all present. However, the changes in policy 602 provoked a short discussion. According to some, Malian law requires all employees to undergo a physical every year and they felt AISB also ought to require the same in the interest of abiding by that overriding law. In the end, it was suggested and agreed to approve the change as proposed and then check Malian law to see if there is a conflict. This will be a task for the next Board.

## **7. General Meeting & Board Elections (by RD)**

RD presented the agenda of the meeting and introduced by RD to approve it, which was seconded by SL and approved by all present.

There was a short discussion on the logistics of the meeting and the elections themselves. SL volunteered to help with the organization of the election side.

## **9. Board Self-Evaluation**

(see handout ‘Board Self-Evaluation’)

RD presented the results of the Board self-evaluation.

There was a long discussion on parent participation in Board activities, especially the meetings. This also involved the (non board member) parents in attendance who contributed their opinions on the subject. Basically, participation is low in everyday activities and the first part of the discussion centered on how to change that, how to make the board more known and encourage the average parent to approach it and be a part of it. Then, there was the question of how much influence could/should a parent have on Board activities. Non Board members are limited to just listening during Board meetings and so cannot really influence any decision taken. No consensus was reached, nor was one really sought.

There was also a discussion on ‘trust’ among board members. This was prompted by the relatively low grade (2.9) in point #4 (‘Board members have confidence and trust in each other’) of the last section of the survey, titled ‘Board Relationships’. This is clearly related to the deep disagreement that arose between Board members during the discussion on whether or not to apply for a short-term loan for the school construction. According to some, the level of trust has fallen between board members, while others claimed the contrary and argued that discussion and disagreement were inevitable and healthy, but did not necessarily amount to distrust. Again, no consensus either.

**10. Other Business**

SR updated the Board on the progress of the Bilateral Agreement that will establish AISB's status vis-à-vis the Government of Mali. Official translators at US State Department in Washington, DC, are still working on the text agreed upon by the Board. In the meantime a new Finance Minister has taken office in Mali and it is unknown what effect that will have on the next step, the negotiations with the Government of Mali.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:45pm**