

AISB BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Regular Session
AISB Library
August 26, 2008

Present: David Henry (DH, *Director*) Rob Van Doeselaar (RD, *Chair*), Olivier Verstraeten (OV), Oumar Saibou (OS), Scott Reese (SR, *U.S. Ambassador's rep*), Christy Bennett (CB), Nico Barning (NB), Steve Lutterbeck (SL), Todd League (TL)

Absent: -

Others present: Randy Brown, (Project Manager) and Lynn Robinson (Teacher's rep) and Mrs. Fatou N'Diaye, Mrs. Alice Daihirou, Mr. Marcel van Driel and others.

1. Opening

a. Call to order, 7:15 PM

- The meeting is opened by RD with a word of welcome to Scott Reese. SR is the new U.S. Ambassador's representative at the AISB board (replacing Stephanie Syptak). He works at the consulate and political section of the American Embassy. He has been 1 year in Mali and is a former high school teacher (before joining the diplomatic service).
- Every member represents him/herself to the new Ambassador's representative.

b. Approval of minutes

Vote: -add: TL should be added as present to the minutes. After the correction, the minutes of the Regular Session May 13th are approved – all approve (7)

2. Teacher report

- Lynn Robinson gave an update on events at school. The school started this year with 8 new teachers. People are adjusting and starting up, such as the afterschool and sports activities and the elaboration on the overall event calendar.
- A workshop was organized for teachers on curriculum mapping and planning, which was of great importance and value. All is going well.

3. Director's report

See addendum 2.

- DH showed changes in facilities done during the summer leave (the breaking of walls, enlarging offices and classrooms, new painting, etc). DH especially thanked Abigail Fofona for all the work that she did during the summer leave. For next year probably there will not be any more physical construction. Also, a new house was rented.
- At this moment the school has 158 students.
- Advanced Placement Exam results: 8 out of 9 students passed their AP exam.
- From 11-14 August, a leadership and curriculum development workshop was organized, which was very well received by the staff. DH said that the consultant, Dr. Melton, could possibly return in six months to help continue guide the development of the curriculum. DH explained that it will take time to develop the curriculum entirely, as it is a perpetual process. On the advice of Dr. Melton, he prefers to slow down and do it well rather than pressing for an unsatisfactory result. At this time no extra time for teachers is planned, but every year, teachers make incorporate into their planning time curriculum development. It might be

necessary to spend some extra time like last year (like the Wednesdays early 2008). DH is confident that the lead teachers and staff are capable of carrying out their new tasks after the Curriculum Coordinator's departure this summer. Due to the late notice he is not planning to replace her this year.

- Dr. Melton developed and now a curriculum document person and DH are working on an electronic storage system that is an intranet, i.e. with hyperlinks connected to more information for the staff. Some of the documents will be made publicly available for parents at the end of the school year.

- A remark at the end of the report: According to the facilitator of the workshop, Dr. Melton, the administration staff at AISB is a little thin compared to others schools. It is something to be kept in mind.

4. Facilities report

see addendum

- CB gave a short highlight of the actual situation.

- Randy Brown was introduced and welcomed as the Project Manager. He will be responsible for the realization of the new campus at Sotuba.

- CB presented the last up to date drawing that RB will use to discuss with the architect in order to start the process of making detailed plans and drawings. RB will hire a Malian Construction Manager. EDM will be contacted for water and electricity. Also other financing possibilities will continue to be explored (like OPIC).

5. Financial report

see addendum

- OV said the figures show we should expect to be above the projected end balance of this year. That means the reserve should grow by \$180.000 in 1 year time, which is a good result. It is also a good sign for the bank to be in favor for a loan.

- With regard to the Audit: For the past several years, one firm has been always asked to do the audits, but the reports were not professional enough. A new company will likely be asked for the 2007/08 audit.

- The two banks BOA and BICIM came with a verbal proposal to co-finance the campus-project. BOA as leader bank and BICIM would participate for 40% of the total loan. There has been a discussion on the interest rate and after some negotiations it was proposed to be 9% (8.7 % if the school needs to pay also the special Malian tax on loans (15% on interest), which is still in discussion, SR will get information on this). The schools guarantee will be the property of the land (not the reserve). Monthly payment may start end of September. Only interest will be paid on the amount of money that we have received (and not on the total amount). OV asked whether we as a Board are ready to move forward under the conditions that were negotiated? The answer was yes by all members (no voting).

- One member mentioned that investigating or organizing a brainstorm meeting for evaluating other alternative sources of financing should be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

6. Policy committee

- DH will ask around if there is a teacher volunteer to join the Policy committee.

- The first meeting is set for Friday September 12th at 15.00h. SR will join the Policy committee.

7. Organizational goals

see addendum.

- Some discussion took place about Objective 1: Building the campus. The latest to start is January 1st
- Objective 2: Continuous process of curriculum development
- Objective 3: Mission, Vision, Beliefs, etc.
- RD suggests an email exchange on the objectives and have it ready before next meeting so that every board member can make his/her observations.
- **Approval will be at the next meeting.**

8. Directors Goals for school year 08-09

See addendum.

- Clarification is given to the plan DH has presented. DH will wait for e-mail comments.
- **Approval will be at the next meeting.**

9. Draft agenda September General meeting

- RD will come with a draft agenda General Meeting for the next Board meeting.

10. Legal status of the school

- Legally, the school has never been recognized by Malian Government via a bilateral agreement, although in 1979 the U.S. Embassy did send diplomatic correspondence 79/117 to the Malian Government explaining the existence of the school ('sous l'égide' of the US Embassy). Only two schools in Africa (Senegal and another) have a bilateral agreement between a U.S. Embassy and the host country.
- SR advises that the school should ask itself what do we want as a school, what do we prefer. Would we want to be independent like a NGO-school, or (half) under the umbrella of the US Embassy as we basically operate now? The US government is officially not running schools, however, for AISB everything is 'in the name of' the American Embassy. Right now, sometimes the status of the foreign staff seems unclear, which will likely occasionally still be not clear if we keep it this way. SR will work on the issue after his return from the States.

Adjournment: 9.30 PM

Submitted by Nico Barning