



**Rilke Schule  
Academic Policy Committee  
Final Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, 14 May 2009**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order shortly after 6:30 PM. APC members attending the meeting were:

Jo Sanders  
Joe Weinberger  
Jeff Ullom  
Liz Crafford  
Debra Schwicht  
Frank Macht  
Crystal Wrabetz, Principal

Absent were;  
Petra Nickerson  
Claudia Bittlingmeier

Other attendees at the meeting were:  
Brett Wilbanks, Building Committee member  
Antje Carlson, former APC member  
Tallee Wellman, Verein President  
Ray Oakley, Parent  
Connie Bensler, Retiring ASD Charter School Liason  
Mary Meade, Incoming ASD Charter School Liason

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

No additions or correction were made to the minutes from April  
**Debra Moved to approve the minutes and Joe W seconded.**  
**The Vote was unanimous.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Antje announced that Carrie Ross has been nominated as one of Deutche Welle's learner of the month. She will be traveling to Germany this summer and they will interview her and put her on their website.

## **IV REPORTS**

### **A. Charter School Liaison**

Connie Bensler, retiring liaison and Mary Meade incoming liaison both attended the meeting. Connie was presented with a sweatshirt and our gratitude for all her hard work helping get Rilke Schule off the ground.

### **B. Principal**

**Friday** The early release request is in a rush. The Union was dragging their feet, and the Superintendent wants everything in this Friday. The Union wants the calendar for next year today. Crystal got it turned in this afternoon.

### **Status of Lottery Numbers**

K = 81 + 7 CAP at 22 per class (admit all on May 15<sup>th</sup>, but then go to wait list)

1 = 50 + 3 CAP at 25 per class (wait list May 15<sup>th</sup> and all future unless numbers go down)

2 = 41 + 4 CAP at 25 per class (admit all May 15<sup>th</sup>)

3 = 27 + 2 CAP at 27 (wait list May 15<sup>th</sup> and all future unless numbers go down)

4 = 21

5 = 25

6 = 15 + 1

7 = 15 + 1

8 = 7 + 1

We discussed maximum number for each grade and decided on the above listed CAPS for grades that are approaching or have reached upper limits. This means we will have our first official waiting list after the May 15<sup>th</sup> lottery.

Summer Camp Numbers: We have 15 students signed up for the 1<sup>st</sup> session and 11 for the second. Behavior Agreement – Families are required to sign a behavior agreement for summer camp. Scholarships will be available.

Crystal wanted to ask teachers about what summer janitorial jobs they wanted done.

More families are needed to host interns.

### **Field Trips**

Grades 5-6-7-8 will go to the Challenger Learning center in Seward for an overnight at the end of school.

Jo S. explained that currently the APC doesn't do staffing for the school, Crystal and Jo do.

Frank expressed concern that we are admitting kids just for the money even though they don't speak German. He urged that we make sure we do not give that impression.

### **C. Rilke Verein**

The Verein would like to schedule a Foraker class for everyone. Verein Board member Cassie Jeremias attended one and said it was very helpful. Jo S. encouraged the Verein to please schedule a class that we could all attend.

A barbecue is scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup>.

Jo suggested that an Intern & Host Family gathering in September would be nice event to host.

## **D. Standing Committees**

### **1. Building**

Joe W. learned that the power lines on 53<sup>rd</sup> street will be replaced by MLP at some point.

The State DOT parking plan for the school was never officially approved by DOT. It is OK for us to be following it while it is under review. DOT expects it to be approved.

Joe and Crystal are working on a plan to provide access to 54<sup>th</sup> St. Should this happen, the State DOT and Municipal DOT will approve a revised plan.

Dick Armstrong, developer friend of Joe W, suggested that the Holy Rosary Church on Fireweed has large property around 30000 sq ft that is a Catholic School. They would like to move into a smaller property. The site is an older building, but could be a possible backup plan if the Sentry Drive site doesn't work for some reason.

Joe W. learned from the landlords that the business next door, Eagle, is moving. If we needed that space for next year we could likely lease it.

Joe W. discussed that we could improve our existing fence situation by putting up the donated fence. The only costs would be the fence posts, as Joe can provide the labor. He is working on a plan with the Landlord to agree to an upgraded fence for next year.

Liz reported for Joe W. that realtor David Boer (the realtor who showed us the Sentry Drive building) would be happy to share information about other potential available buildings to lease or purchase in Anchorage to help us compare with the Sentry Drive property. He will report his findings to the building committee. The building specifics that we wish for him to focus on are:

- 30,000 – 45,000 sq feet (including a gymnasium and a kitchen)
- 17 functioning classrooms with 700 sq ft minimum, 800 sq ft preferred for most classrooms.
- room to build up to 10 additional classrooms in future years
- Open space for playground and sport field
- Additionally, the property has to be able to meet all of the new municipal school code requirements, and pass muster with ASD building folks.

Brett Wilbanks discussed the status of Rilke Inc. and asked that the board resolve to lease a property from Rilke Inc. if the opportunity arises at a rate not to exceed the current lease.

Frank M asked who would comprise Rilke Inc?

Joe W. asked about the issues with the IRS and Rilke Inc?

Jo S asked if a bank would loan Rilke Inc. money?

*Connie Bensler arrives with Mary Mead who takes over in July.*

Brett stated that the mission of Corporation (Rilke Inc.) is to further Rilke Schule.

**Joe W. moved that the APC intends to lease a building from Rilke Inc. if Rilke Inc. can find a suitable property at the current lease rate or less.**

**Jeff U. seconded the motion.**

**Discussion: Frank M asks Rilke Inc to provide information about bylaws and who will be on the board.**

**Vote: Unanimous**

## **2. Curriculum**

Jo S reported that we are the first school in Alaska to have a German Junior National Honor Society. We have 3 8<sup>th</sup> graders who qualify.

The results of the voluntary **International A2 German test** which is a test of 2<sup>nd</sup> year high school equivalent German knowledge are in. We expected a very few students to pass, and 17 passed in grades 4 – 8, which is excellent for the first time taking the test.

Jo S asked for input on changing the first 4 grades to a Looping system.

Discussion:

Advantages: Students already have two teachers. If you loop, you keep the same teachers. There is a close connection between the students and the teachers. There is no startup time in the fall.

Disadvantages: The Looping teacher has to teach all the grades and thus has to know a lot more subject material and prepare more. Some teachers feel strongly about only wanting to teach one level.

Jo indicated that there is the possibility of looping with German teachers. Mary Meade looped 2 & 3 and 5 & 6, and reports that she loved it. She knew the families and their learning styles. Frank M had it that way in Germany as a child and would prefer it. He discussed that the continuity of relationships is shown to be very important for early

childhood development. There is much less fear and anxiety, and no sense of loss. The research that is available is very positive. In Alaska we are so isolated from our extended families that we don't have those mentors here that many families elsewhere do. Our teachers could serve that role if they taught in a looping setting. Frank noted that while some have expressed concern that a child may be disadvantaged by a weak teacher, it's the APC's job to make sure the staff all has the necessary credentials and strengths for the job.

Connie B. noted that Winterbury Charter school loops grades 1-6.

Frank asked if we should review the looping information he brought to the meeting and schedule a special session to discuss it. Jo commented that it was too late in the year to schedule something as the teachers will be leaving right after school gets out. Jo will look into possible volunteers for next year, and then we can develop the idea further next year.

### **3. Finance Committee**

Treasurer's report was handed out. There was nothing new to report.

### **4. Goals Committee**

Frank reported that the goals committee spoke with all the children, all the teachers, and held two sessions for parents. The basic questions asked of everyone were:

What brought you into teaching, or to Rilke Schule?

What have you enjoyed? What are the challenges?

What is your dream school?

The passion of everyone about learning and being here was tremendous. Teacher motivation was fabulous. There were many voices in support of more art, music, language, and sports. Many acknowledged the real sense of family they feel at the school. Frank observed the variety of students intellectual vs vocational needs and asked us to think about how we want to deal with that in the future.

More than 20 pages of notes were compiled and will be summarized into a public document.

### **5. Public Relations Committee**

No new news.

## **V. Old Business**

### **A. Nutrition booklet**

Liz is working on it for the fall with Ann Weese. They will prepare a short pamphlet revised from the earlier one, and compile the other information onto the website. The information will be ready to distribute at registration in August.

### **B. Tardy Policy**

Mary Meade described what they do at Eagle River Academy: They put a large digital clock in the window facing the parking lot and synched it with official time. The morning duty attendant encourages them to hurry if they are running late. After the 5<sup>th</sup> tardy, they send home a form letter telling them they have a detention. In detention they have to describe their morning routine and address what could they do to help their family get them there in time. They make a copy of this and mail it to the parents. This seems to help a great deal, and eliminates most tardy problems.

After 5 more tardies, they get another detention where they review what didn't work. The parents come in and review the letter with them. They have very few children who receive a second set of 5 tardies.

Each year they do a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter tardy challenge: They tally them by grade level. The Grade with fewest tardies gets a treat.

Parent Orientation is held every other Tuesday at 9 AM. All families have to attend one before their child can attend the school. Mary runs the evening ones. A Board member runs the program during the day.

### **C. Traffic Problem**

As part of the DOT traffic plan, no traffic is allowed to leave to International Rd by our alleyway. It is supposed to be blocked with a solid barrier. See building discussion above for other exit alternatives. This discussion was in response to a traffic accident with a Rilke Parent turning left from 53<sup>rd</sup> onto Arctic southbound and being hit by another southbound vehicle on Arctic. There is concern that with the increased traffic with more students in the fall, the situation will be even more hazardous.

### **D. Calendar**

Liz reported that the calendar is mostly complete. There are links to it on both the school website and the Verein website. It is available to the public and editable by Julie, Crystal, Liz and Tallee. Crystal had requested that we put in both a Spirit Day and a Theme day each month.

1, Spirit Days – Days when students are allowed to wear any clothing with a Rilke Schule logo, including t-shirts and sweatshirts.

2. Theme days – Predefined days where students can dress according to a specified theme such as Earth Day Green, or Story book Character day, or St. Nikolaus Red. Details of each theme day will be posted well in advance on the calendar.

**Liz moved that the APC allow for one Spirit day and one Theme day each month, and that they need to be defined on the calendar ahead of time.**

**Frank M seconds the motion**

**Vote Unanimous**

3. Other concerns and additions.

Claudia mentioned (via email to Liz) that the all-school awards assemblies still need scheduling for the calendar.

She also proposed the possibility of having one grade-level "show" per month throughout the year, rather than having the plays for all the grades at the end of the school year. (Teachers could sign up for a month, and present their play/sketch/songs or whatever performances to the entire school.) For example, 3rd graders would present in September, 6th graders in October, etc.

## **VI. New Business**

### **A. Optional Intensives**

It was agreed to send out an announcement to the parents about the program which is still pending approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM

### **Followups:**

Liz will Check with Claudia about German Club contributions to Scholarship fund for summer camp.

Crystal and Jo are working on next year's staffing, and where to put all the new classes.

The Verein is going to try to schedule a Foraker class that we call all attend together.

The Verein will follow up with Jo about putting together an Intern – Host Family gathering event in September.

Joe W. is working on details for a replacement fence for next year.

Liz will followup with the Realtor about providing information about other possible school suitable properties in Anchorage.

Brett W. will provide more detailed information to the board about the Bylaws of Rilke Inc. and who will serve on its board.

Frank is summarizing the notes from the Goals Committee meetings.

Liz will have a new nutrition pamphlet ready by registration in August.

Liz will get out an announcement about the Optional Intensive program to the parents.

### **Unfinished Business**

Still need to schedule quarterly awards ceremonies

Further discussion or recommendation to teachers about monthly plays by grade instead of a single day in May with all the plays.

Need to finalize officers for APC.