

**Erie Elementary Charter School
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2025, 6:00pm
1405 N Washtenaw Ave, Chicago, IL 60622**

Directors attending in person: Sarah Airola; Mary Boehler; Melanie Madigan; Rajiv Naidu; Victor Sy Nelson; Keith Ellett

Directors attending virtually: Maria Hawilo; Vivek Sadanand; Leslie Pigozzi; April Kennedy

Staff attending in person: Karem Gomez, Principal; Aimee Frantzen; Marisol Martinez; Diana Morquecho

Board Chair Sarah Airola brought the meeting to order at approximately 06:11pm

Mary Boehler: I move to bring the meeting to order

Sy Nelson: Seconded the motion

All who voted in favor: Sarah Airola; Mary Boehler; Melanie Madigan; Rajiv Naidu; Victor Sy Nelson

All opposed: None

All who abstained: None

Ms. Airola asked if directors had a chance to review meeting minutes from the October 8th regular meeting?

Sy Nelson: I move to approve the minutes of the 10/08/25 meeting as presented.

Mary Boehler: Seconded the motion

All in favor: Sarah Airola; Mary Boehler; Melanie Madigan; Rajiv Naidu; Victor Sy Nelson; Keith Ellett

All opposed: No one opposed

All who abstained: No one abstained

The next on the agenda is voting to renew director terms. Ms. Airola wants to hold off on renewing board terms; she would like to review that those up for renewal check that everyone is fulfilling board requirements. Maria Hawilo will be resigning from the board. As Mary Boehler is doing important work on committees, there is no need to delay a vote on Ms. Boehler's renewal.

Sy Nelson: Moved to renew the board term of Mary Boehler another two years

Melanie Madigan: Seconded the motion

All in favor: Sarah Airola; Mary Boehler; Melanie Madigan; Rajiv Naidu; Victor Sy Nelson; Keith Ellett

Opposed: None

Those who abstained: None

Ms. Airola indicated that we will table renewal votes for all other directors until the next regular meeting. Are there any comments or new business? None from anyone present or participating virtually

The next order of business is the INCS lawsuit. A group of senior board leaders and Principal Gomez met with representatives from INCS to ask questions about the lawsuit. A decision was made to bring the issue to the entire board for a vote.

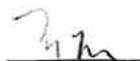
What INCS representatives explained is that the reason INCS is pursuing the lawsuit is labor agreement language included in Charter agreements starting with 2023-2024 school contracts. It is language now being put into all the school renewal contracts. INCS is fighting for the language to be removed from the agreements.

The concern for us as a charter school is that the language being added to the agreements with the district means we must follow the Illinois Labor Relations Act instead of the *National* Relations Labor Act. The latter has been followed historically when there was discussion or consideration of unionization. The federal regulation provides for a very fair and valid process. The gist of the litigation is to get a permanent injunction from the schools being subject to the STATE Labor Relations Act.

School leadership is not focusing on union activity when considering joining this lawsuit. It has nothing to do with being opposed unions or not. It is about which regulation to follow when dealing with union activity. Leadership believes that the National Labor Relations Act which has always been the regulation that was followed is fair and reasonable.

Directors discussed some examples of what school leadership and staff are allowed to do and not do if forced to follow the *Illinois* version of Labor Relations Act that the lawsuit seeks to remove from school agreements.

Directors expressed their concerns about how joining the lawsuit would be seen by the school district and whether it is possible this could negatively impact the school's charter renewal application next year. Several directors indicated that in principle, they believe in the merit of the lawsuit, but they are concerned that it could negatively affect the school in some way.

 Initials of Marisol Martinez

 Initials of Rajiv Naidu

Directors had questions about how many schools were already signed on as co-plaintiffs in the suit including whether any of the larger charter networks or schools were involved and which schools? Those who attended the meeting with INCS confirmed that well-known Charters and networks were already signed on and that INCS had approached additional schools including Erie.

Ms. Madigan suggested speaking to the schools that have already joined about how they came to a decision.

Ms. Gomez indicated that INCS asked for an answer by Friday, October 31st, so there is not a lot of time to make a decision. School and board leaders were only recently able to meet with INCS staff.

Mr. Sadanand asked wouldn't all schools get the benefit if the lawsuit is successful even if we don't sign on? Possibly. It depends on what is decided. It is also possible that those schools involved get the injunction, then we may have to hire an attorney and fight for the same injunction.

Directors asked Ms. Gomez for her opinion? No matter what we decided she believes that this will open up a conversation about teacher rights; we will have to speak to our teachers. She is extremely concerned given her previous experience with unions and conversations with teaching staff when she was a principal at prior charter schools/network. She wants the ability to have open conversations with our staff.

Assistant Principal Aimee Frantzen: It is very important to message to the staff that school leadership is not against unions or union rights. What we are concerned with is that the regulation being added to the agreements silences us when discussing the impact of unions on our school. It's about our right to have a conversation with staff and having a voice in what happens.

Directors discussed that if we join the lawsuit, it is important how it is discussed/presented to the staff. As staff are not going to read the entire lawsuit document. It is up to leadership to present and explain the key points.

Directors discussed whether voting members present believed they had enough information to vote on the issue and decided to proceed to a vote on the issue.

Mary Boehler: I move that we vote on whether the school should join the INCS lawsuit

Sy Nelson: I second the motion

All in favor of joining the lawsuit: All present

All opposed to joining the lawsuit: None

All those abstaining: None.

Ms. Airola: Coming back to the issue of voting to renew director terms.

The next board meeting is not until January, so it was agreed to go ahead and vote on renewing terms.

The directors up for renewal are: Keith Ellett, Rahul Kalsi, Melanie Madigan, Sy Nelson, Vivek Sadanand and Tony Sutton.

Mary Boehler: I move that we approve the list of director candidates to renew their two-year term subject to review that they are meeting requirements.

Rajiv Naidu: I second the motion.

Those in favor: All present voted to approve

Those opposed: None

Those who abstained: None

That was the final order of business.

Melanie Madigan: I move to adjourn the meeting

Rajiv Naidu: I second the motion

Those in favor: All directors present

Those opposed: None

Those who abstained: None

Minutes Prepared by



Marisol Martinez, Business Operations Director

Minutes Approved by



Rajiv Naidu, Board Secretary