

NASHVILLE CHINESE SCHOOL

大納城中文學校

Board Meeting
March 31, 2007

Boardmembers Present	Bonnie Chen BeeLing Chang SuMei Chang Emory Shyong Susan Reiman John Liu
Others Present	Dr. Kyi Tham Jason Lei (assistant principal)

Minutes:

- 12:47 pm – meeting opened formally
- John & Jason received a copy of the Tennessee Department of Revenue Certificate of Exemption listing NCS's Taxpayer Identification Number
- Discussion of suggestion of renting a P.O. Box to serve as NCS's permanent address
 - Mail received by NCS include tax and legal papers, charity correspondence, and student registration forms
 - Size and location of P.O. Box discussed
 - Smallest P.O. Box at post office is \$50/yr with renewal every 6 months
 - While Bellemeade is closest to H.G. Hill Middle School, other locations were considered: Brentwood or Vanderbilt
 - John volunteered to pick up mail weekly if P.O. Box is located at Bellemeade post office
 - By unanimous vote, all present voted in favor of opening a P.O. Box initially at Bellemeade unless Principal Sherry Wang desires mail to be forwarded to her residence
- Discussion of suggestion of setting up a telephone number to serve as NCS's permanent phone number
 - AOL's free voicemail line was demonstrated and discussed. Point was raised that the system lacked the ability to have a dual English/Chinese voicemail prompt. Inability to directly answer the line in person also an issue.
 - Option of setting up a telephone number with the ability to forward it to the principal or another person was discussed but considered unnecessary

- Conclusion was to list individual home numbers on the website and possibly a NCS voicemail number (via AOL) as well
- Discussion of NCS website maintenance and modification
 - Jason raised issue that he could not enter website to modify contents. Board responded that actions were being taken to grant Jason access
 - Website originally set up 4 years ago by Jason Skinner (graphics artist) and sponsored by Bonnie's gift
 - Website hosting up for renewal this summer, currently \$40/yr
 - Jason suggested switching to GoDaddy.com (free hosting with 5 GB storage) and volunteered to investigate the transfer from existing hosting
- Discussion of updating NCS's bylaws
 - Request was made by Sherry and Elizabeth Yang
 - Emory suggested that a subcommittee draft a set of proposed bylaws and present them to the board for a vote
 - Susan volunteered to work with Sherry and Elizabeth on drafting a new set of proposed bylaws to present to board by May 12, 2007
- Board advised Jason about the responsibility of the Principal to present information on school enrollment, financials, and strategic goals to the board at least once a semester
- Discussion of current e-learning initiative at NCS
 - Use of IQ-Chinese for at-home learning and to supplement in-class teaching discussed
 - Jason commented on how current school system fails to benchmark and measure student progress. He emphasized the need to change the current school model (strong speaking and listening comprehension but weak reading and writing) – otherwise his own children doomed to functional illiteracy
 - Susan mentioned March 30, 2007 article in the Tennessean about Metro elementary, middle and high schools offering Chinese language classes next year
 - Jason emphasized how an e-learning model could attract students in these future classes since NCS classes would supplement their weekday school learning as well as provide a community for students learning Chinese to meet together
- Discussion of Sherry's request to increase board size to 9 members
 - Sherry felt FCC families were underrepresented on board
 - Susan agreed that a larger board might make sense as the school grew in size
- John made a request to identify Dell employees affiliated with NCS, and Surapong Papimeteeporn was identified by BeeLing, Emory, and Bonnie
- 2.26 pm meeting closed formally

Friday, 03/30/07

Metro students learn Chinese to compete in global market

More schools groom future businesspeople

By JAIME SARRIO
Staff Writer

When Jack LeGrone completes third grade, he'll become one of the most sought-after members of the U.S. work force thanks to one skill increasingly in demand. He'll be able to speak Chinese.

Well, not fluently, of course. But even the few things he'll learn as a student at Julia Green Elementary will put him head and shoulders above older Americans who elected to study such practical languages as, ahem, Latin.

LeGrone is a student at one of three Metro schools that will offer Chinese for the first time next year. Two other schools — Hillsboro High School and West End Middle — also will offer the program so children are exposed to the language throughout grade school.

The goal is to groom students to become workers in a global marketplace by giving them the skills they need to compete. And with China poised to become the world's economic powerhouse, knowledge of the language sure wouldn't hurt.

"In 10 years, the largest English-speaking country is not going to be the United States, it is going to be China," Metro Schools Director Pedro Garcia said. "At the early ages we want kids to be able to grasp phrases and words and familiarize themselves with the language."

Metro was the first public school district in the area to offer Chinese, Garcia said. Nashville schools launched the language two years ago at Hume-Fogg High School and



Ping Shen Whittaker teaches a seventh-grade Chinese class at Martin Luther King Jr. Magnet School in Nashville on Thursday. This is Whittaker's second year teaching Chinese at MLK. She has been an educator for 26 years. (DIPTI VAIDYA / THE TENNESSEAN)

also offer it at Martin Luther King Jr. If resources are available, the program may expand to Eakin Elementary, Garcia said.

Roger Biles, CEO of SourceMark, a Nashville-based manufacturing company with offices in China, said two of his 20 staffers are Chinese and help translate during meetings and business transactions. " ... If you have to speak one language it wouldn't be Spanish, it would be Chinese," he said. "If I'm going to hire someone now, it's going to be someone who would almost have to have knowledge of the culture."



MLK Magnet High's People to People International Club and Asian Club watch a Heritage Day presentation last month. MLK is among the Metro schools that teach Chinese classes. (JOHN PARTIPILO / FILE / THE TENNESSEAN)

Metro's only Chinese teacher, Ping Shen Whittaker, may well be training them. She said there's been a strong interest in the classes, even though students don't understand how valuable the language is. Nineteen students are enrolled at Hume-Fogg while 59 are enrolled at MLK, which serves middle and high school students.

"It's the novelty that attracts them, the curiosity," she said. "My middle school group thinks it is totally different from any other language."

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Five Metro schools will offer Chinese next year, and some private schools. Here's a sample:

Metro schools

Hume-Fogg High School
Martin Luther King Jr.
Hillsboro High School
Julia Green Elementary
West End Middle

Private schools

Harpeth Hall, upper grades
Montgomery Bell, upper grades (starts in fall)