

HARAMBEE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY CHARTER SCHOOL  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

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**Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, March 31, 2021**

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 31, 2021 via Zoom 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**Open Session**

**Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

by Board Member Joseph Foster on behalf of the Board Chair, Maurice Baynard

**Libation (Mama Rene Whitby)**

The Cultural Leader and Board member Renee Whitby lead members with libation.

**Introduction of Visitors and Others Present**

There were no visitors present at this meeting

A prospective Board member is in attendance at this meeting

**Roll Call**

Board member Joseph asked Board members and the senior leadership team to give introductions. Board members and the senior leadership team introduced themselves, stated their names and titles.

**Board members Present:**

Joseph Foster

Larry Bell

Donna Holmes- Lockett

Renee Whitby

Maurice Baynard

Jan Gillespie- Walton

C. Wade Mosely

**Board members absent:**

Charis Jackson  
Marirose Roach  
Lakiesha Creighton

**Others Present:**

Monique Braxton, prospective Board member  
Gregory Shannon                      CEO  
Michelle Thornton                      CFO  
Ericka Washington                      Assistant Principal of School Operations  
Sara Ferguson                              Assistant Principal of Instruction

**Review of the February Minutes (Approval of minutes)**

Board member Joseph asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Larry Bell made a motion, seconded by Board member Wade Mosley to accept the minutes as presented, all members agreed, there was a unanimous motion to accept.

**Motion:** Accept minutes as presented

Approval AYE: 7      Nays: 0      Abstentions: 0      Absent: 3

**Leadership Report, Greg Shannon**

Greg asked Ericka to share her screen and reported that all administrators would be reporting on their respective domains.

**Organizational Leadership and Expansion**

Greg reported that they continue to engage with the Roz Group and Mazda Miles regarding the Annual Gala. Preparations are well under way for the event. The event is scheduled for Thursday April 15, 2021. The VIP session will be held from 5:30 p.m. until 6:00p.m and the general session will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Greg advised that he and Dr. Baynard are developing a pre- recorded presentation on Saturday for the event. He also reported that they have selected three individuals to be awarded from the metropolitan area that have shown significant promise in STEM. They will have two musical selections as well as a host of testimonials from local politicians and Harambee alumnus and students.

**Property Acquisition**

Greg reported that they are still looking for properties and that they have been working with real estate brokers regarding a property at 4601 Market Street. He advised that the property is already rented to other organizations so they do have some concerns regarding the clientele that will occupy the building, and its appropriateness for students in a school setting. They will continue to investigate property within a three to five mile radius as mandated for Harambee.

### **Friends of Harambee**

Greg reported that they had a great cultivation advisory board event. They currently have eight 8 members that have signed up to participate and are currently in the process of scheduling monthly advisory board meetings. Greg reported that there have been great opportunities from the cultivation event to partner with individuals and to take advantage of grant opportunities. Greg, Michelle and Sara will be will be looking at the grants and selecting those that are most appropriate.

### **Organizational Compliance**

Greg announced that they are mandated by PDE and the School District of Philadelphia to have Board mandated training. The training has to occur between now and the fall of 2021. Greg indicated that he will be working with Dr. Baynard to determine which dates are most available for Board members. Greg advised that it is important to facilitate the training because it will show up on the ACE report. There are 10-12 mandated training hours for Board development and training.

### **2021 Summer Retreat**

Greg asked that everyone hold the date of July 12<sup>th</sup> 2021 for the 2021 Annual Summer Retreat. He stated that it will be held locally just as it was last year. Board member Larry Bell asked if Greg would consider a virtual aspect of the Retreat, as it will be hard for him to get away this year for three consecutive days during the week. Greg stated that there will be a virtual component, especially for those who are not comfortable being on site. Greg turned the floor to Sara Ferguson for her report.

### **Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Sara Ferguson**

Sara provided updates to the Board on planning for the upcoming school year. She announced that they will be filling orders for books for the next school year based on their projected enrollment.

### **Evaluation Protocol**

Sara reported that they have completed all announced formal observations and all mid year appraisals. They are currently in the process of completing unannounced formal observations.

### **PDE Data Summit (March 22 - 24, 2021)**

Sara reported that last week she attended a virtual data summit with Ericka and Angela.

### **PSSA Update**

Sara also gave an update on the PSSA. She reported that they would be assessing students from May 3<sup>rd</sup> through May 28<sup>th</sup>. They will be testing third grade through eighth grade students. PDE has advised that they must make a good faith effort to assess all students that are enrolled at Harambee. She reported that they were informed that they will not use the scores to rank schools nor will the scores be used as part of teacher evaluation, and schools will not be penalized for lack of participation. While they are looking for a 95% benchmark, they realize that many families and students may opt out of testing all together. Board member Renee asked how the students will be brought in for the testing. Sara indicated that they are surveying families now to determine which students will be brought in for testing. Once they know the number of students that are coming in they will know exactly how to set up the testing schedule. Greg turned the floor to Ericka for her report.

### **School Operations, Ericka Washington**

#### **Facilities**

Ericka reported that the door access and surveillance systems are up and running and are approximately 97- 98% complete. The last steps are for staff to be trained in both systems. She announced that she is now in possession of the key fobs. The intrusion and alarm systems are being installed today which will finalize the safety of the building. Ericka announced that the policy manual that she shared with the Board will go out today.

#### **Return to in-person instruction**

Ericka also reported on the return to in-person instruction. She stated that the return will take place on Monday April 5<sup>th</sup> and K-2 students will

begin on Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>. She reported that they have met with and trained all staff that will be returning to the building. She noted that staff attended training on March 12<sup>th</sup> and were given a return to in-person instruction handbook, which lays out all of the health and safety protocols and scheduling.

Ericka stated that the building is ready for the return of teachers who will begin on Monday. They will begin by teaching their virtual classes from their respective classrooms so that they are prepared on April 12<sup>th</sup> when students return in person. She also indicated that the food services company would be there on Monday as well, to prepare to serve the breakfast and lunch programs.

Ericka also noted that Parent orientation would follow on Tuesday for those who opted in. Wade inquired as to how many students have opted out. Ericka responded that there were a total of 171 eligible students and 67 opted in, so approximately 104 have opted out and will remain on line. Board member Wade then asked if the decision to opt in or out was permanent or could students opt back in. Ericka responded that it is possible to still opt out, however, if a parent opts out for their child, they cannot opt back in. She indicated that this decision was made to ensure that safety and instructional protocols along with social distancing would be maintained. Board member Joseph asked whether students would have transportation from the School District. Ericka responded that there were only four students that were eligible for transportation and they have recently reached out to those students and made arrangements for them. She advised that the information regarding transportation would be shared with the parents at orientation on Tuesday.

### **Specialized Services, Angela Dennis**

Greg provided the report on behalf of Angela Dennis.

### **ESY Notification letters – March 30, 2021**

Greg reported that Extended School Year notifications went out to all parents on March 30, 2021 for students that are eligible for extended school year programs, through the summer of 2021. Planning and preparation for students with IEP's is currently underway.

### **Student Records**

Greg reported that they are working on some compliance issues for the middle grades because of the lack of personnel. The issues occurred due to not having teachers in those grade levels. They have contracted with two individuals who will bring the IEPs into compliance between the months of April and May.

### **Compensatory Education**

Greg reported that they did owe compensatory education and have contracted with Tutor Time for those students that they owed compensatory education. The compensatory letters went out to all of the families on March 30, 2021.

### **Legal**

Greg reported that all legal cases have been settled and that Angela is now in the process of unannounced Special Education teacher Observations. He also noted that teacher observations started in the second semester of the school year. Board member Wade asked if any of the 67 students that are returning to in person instruction are Special Education students. Greg responded that two of the students are Special Education. Greg turned to Michelle to give the finance report.

### **Business and Finance, M. Thornton, CFO**

Michelle turned the members attention to the Board packets that she distributes each month. She explained the contents of the Board packets to the newest prospective Board member, Monique Braxton and existing members. She asked the Board to read the contents of the packages and to reach out to her with any questions.

### **New Business**

#### **Proposed Budget 2021-2022**

Michelle highlighted the budget process and indicated that their budget process is underway. She also noted that she met with the Finance committee on Monday and shared the proposed budget for the 2021/2022 school year. She stated that they are still waiting to hear from the state with announcements for proposed per pupil rates. She also indicated that they are planning to make a full budget presentation to the Board next month.

### **ESER II Funds**

Michelle reported that they discussed the ESER II funds in their executive session and that Harambee is expected to receive 1.8 million dollars. She stated that they are also hearing that there is a possible increase to that amount and she will provide updates as they receive additional information regarding that grant. She also reported that they met the deadline to submit an application for the second half of a Farm II school grant in the amount of \$20,000.00 dollars. She stated that they have a strong application and will be looking forward to receiving those funds.

### **Special Education Teachers**

Michelle reported that they are still in need of special education teachers and are currently advertising for that position. They are also looking for regular certified education teachers for this school year as well. She announced that they recently interviewed a teacher last week that they will be onboarding in May. Michelle asked the Board to recommend any certified and /or special education teachers that they may know to Harambee.

### **Statement of Financial Interest forms**

Michelle announced that the Statement of Financial Interest forms have been received from Board members and were submitted by the deadline. She thanked the Board and Executive leaders for their timely submission. Michelle turned the floor back to Greg Shannon and he asked if there were any questions from the Board on any of the reports that were presented. Board member Joseph asked for a renewal update. Greg responded that they have not heard from the district on their renewal. They are anxiously awaiting feedback and he hopes that they will receive some information within the next ten-day to two week period.

### **Old Business**

#### **Committee Reports**

Dr. Baynard asked committees to give their reports

- **Cultural Committee**

Board member Renee Whitby reported that the Cultural Committee had a very productive meeting. She indicated that their meetings are held on every third Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. She told members that she posed a question for members to consider for the

next meeting. She asked what is the educational philosophy, climate and school culture? She said that the direction that they need to be headed in would be infusing culture with the academic curriculum and philosophy of the school. Sara, a member of the committee was asked to illuminate some of the discussion that took place during the committee meeting. She reported that Meghan the Culture leader for Harambee attended the meeting and presented a slide of some of their prior discussions. Sara said they intend to add to and enhance the cultural aspects of the school. Their aim is to show students the reason that “they do what they do” and to link all of their practices to a principle or a rule and the philosophy of the founders.

- **Education Committee**

Board member Donna Holmes- Lockett reported that the Education Committee has not met but Sara has done a great job with keeping them updated on what is going on virtually, in the classrooms and with what will happen once the students return in person.

Dr. Baynard asked Donna if the committee needed any help with coordinating their meetings. Donna asked Sara’s thoughts and Sara responded that the two of them would talk and will include Board member, Jan Walton in the conversation as a committee member as well. Jan informed members that she had met with Board members Wade and Larry who lead her in the right direction in obtaining information that she used to create a report that was forwarded to Dr. Baynard.

### **Action Items**

#### **New Trustee nomination**

Dr. Baynard entertained a motion to accept Monique Braxton as new Board Member. Board member Joseph Foster made the motion seconded by Larry Bell, all were in favor and none were opposed. Dr. Baynard welcomed Monique to the Board as its newest member

**Motion:** Nomination for Monique Braxton as new Board Member

Approval AYE: 7      Nays: 0      Abstentions: 0      Absent: 3

Dr. Baynard entertained a motion to adjourn, all were in favor, none opposed



**Motion: Adjourn Board Meeting**

Approval AYE: 7      Nays: 0      Abstentions: 0      Absent: 3

**Next Public Meeting:**

The next public Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 28<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 6:00 p.m.