

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

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 28th, 2021

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 28, 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 Chairman Maurice Baynard

Libation (Mama Rene Whitby)

The Board Chair asked the Cultural Leader and Board member Renee Whitby to lead members with libation.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

There were no visitors present at this meeting

Roll Call

The Board Chair 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:

Maurice Baynard
Joseph Foster
Larry Bell
Donna Holmes- Lockett
Renee Whitby
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Charis Jackson
Monique Braxton

Board members absent:

Marirose Roach
Lakiesha Creighton
C. Wade Mosely

Others Present:

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| Gregory Shannon | CEO |
| Michelle Thornton | CFO |
| Ericka Washington | Assistant Principal of School Operations |
| Sara Ferguson | Assistant Principal of Instruction |

Review of the March Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Dr. Baynard 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 Renee made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Board member Charis seconded the motion. All members agreed, there was a unanimous motion to accept.

Motion: Accept March Board meeting minutes as presented

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Leadership Report Greg Shannon, CEO

Dr. Baynard turned the meeting over to Greg Shannon for the Leadership Report.

Charter Renewal

Greg gave updates on the Charter Renewal process and reported that his team had a meeting one week ago with the Charter School office and that they are still involved in the renewal process at this time.

Fundraising and Development

Greg reported that Harambee had a wonderful Gala event one week ago. He said that the event placed Harambee on the map in the broader stem community and helped to develop some outstanding partnerships. Some of the partnerships include Einstein, and The Stroud Water Research Group. He also reported that they are continuing to receive donations and remain open for further donations. He noted that they have received approximately \$6,000.00 after

expenses to date. They will continue to reach out to some of the vendors that they have not heard from. Overall, the Gala was widely received and very successful.

Friends of Harambee

Greg reported that he had a meeting with Roz McPhearson and the Advisory Board yesterday. He advised that they have two tentative dates for their upcoming meetings. They will meet on May 19, or May 26th with plans to meet every other month. Mr. James Elam is now a member and will partner with Harambee with plans to adopt ten (10) Harambee students to follow through High School and beyond.

Mandated Board Training, Act 55

Greg advised members that the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the School District of Philadelphia has mandated four (4) hours of Board Training. He recommended that the training be completed in July during the Summer Leadership Retreat. The Retreat will be held on Tuesday July 13th, Wednesday July 14th and Thursday July 15th. Greg asked everyone to hold those dates because it will be important to develop strategies and coherent messaging for their grand re-opening in September 2021. Greg announced that they have reopened the building for kindergarten through second grade. He asked Sara Ferguson to elaborate further on the School opening, Curriculum and Instruction.

Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Sara Ferguson

Sara reported that students K-2 were welcomed back into the building along with teachers. She noted that both students and staff are adapting very well to all of the protocols that have been put in place. She also announced that the OWL technology (camera's and microphone) are in place and have been very helpful in the classrooms. Sara acknowledged all of the departments that were instrumental and contributed to the success of bringing the students back into the building.

Curriculum

Sara indicated that she has been in the process of looking at intervention resources for next year. She noted that she met with an Education Resource Vendor last Friday to look at resources that can be used for their summer program. She also informed members that they

are in the process of putting the summer program together and have tentatively scheduled it for June 22, through July 26, 2021. She also reported that they are currently in the process of completing unannounced formal observations.

Assessment PSSA Update

Sara announced that they would be conducting PSSA testing. She advised that they have offered it to all of their enrolled students grades 3-8. They have arranged for them to come in, for in-person testing. They currently have approximately 140 students who have opted in. She noted that because of social distancing, they would not be bringing all of the grades 3-8 in to test simultaneously. They will begin with grades 3-5 on May 3rd and then bring grades 6-7 in on May 10th with grades 4 and 8 in on May 19th. Grades 4 and 8 will test additionally for Science. Sara advised that neither the schools nor students would be penalized for lack of participation. She stated that they plan to use those scores just to see where students are and where they are going as the year progresses. Sara opened the floor for questions.

Board member Donna asked if the summer program would be hybrid and Sara answered that they plan to be in the building this year for their summer program. Dr. Baynard asked Sara what the overall goals of the summer program would be. Sara indicated that the program aims to address student needs. She said that when the students first enter the summer program they will be assessed to determine which areas the students would need support in either ELA and/or Math. She advised that another goal of the program would be social. They want to get the students back into school to assess and address their social and emotional needs as well. In addition to academics, they want to conduct fun and enriching activities for the students this summer.

Board member Renee asked how are they going to assess the students in order to promote them to the next grade level. Sara said that they began with the first marking period and identified those students that were struggling. They set up one to one meetings with the families and have been working with the students and their families to put written support plans in place for each of them. They have worked with the students in small groups, during their lunch periods and some after school. As a result, the list of students that are doing poorly has significantly declined.

Board member Monique asked if students in the neighborhood wanted to attend the summer program, would they be allowed. Greg advised that by regulation, and from a liability standpoint, they are only allowed to provide services to those students that are enrolled at Harambee. Monique then asked if the video surveillance system and camera's (OWL) are being monitored. Ericka indicated that the systems are being monitored and that the footage is kept for 45 days. Sara advised that they would be looking at all of the suggestions from the Board to determine what they can add to the system for the next school year.

Board member Charis asked how the summer program slots are being allotted. Greg indicated that the slots were carefully thought out through data driven information. He noted that they looked at how children are performing and at those students that have had the greatest amount of learning loss throughout the school year. He advised that they would like to give those students who need it the most, the first opportunity to participate.

Board member Renee asked what would be the maximum number of students and staff allowed in the building. Ericka responded that the maximum occupancy is 17 persons per classroom with a 6-foot distance. This would include 15 students and 2 adults in every classroom. Ericka also advised that the state has relaxed their social distancing guidelines to a 3-foot distance, but they continue to maintain the 6-foot distance guideline.

Dr. Baynard asked Greg to speak on the one case of COVID that they experienced and how it was managed. Greg responded, that the leadership team put together a 34 page comprehensive handbook for all staff and conducted extensive training on safety protocols. He advised that all of the cohorts remained together and that there was no mingling out side of each cohort group. He noted that there was only one student that tested positive and no one else in the same cohort group tested positive, because they were able to place that cohort back on the virtual platform and have them to quarantine for the recommended number of days. He said that no co-mingling along with following the protocols in the handbook allowed them to avoid an outbreak. Greg then turned the meeting over to Ericka for the Operations Report.

School Operations, Ericka Washington

Draft 2021-2022 Academic Calendar

Ericka provided a brief update on the academic calendar. She indicated that Harambee would have new teachers and staff coming in on August 16th for new teacher and staff orientation. She also advised that the first day of school for all teachers and staff will be on August 17th and the first day for student's K-8 will be on August 30th. The last day of school for students will be on June 16th and the last day of school for staff will be on June 17th 2021. She asked the Board to review the calendar for consideration of a vote this evening.

Board Policy Manual

Ericka advised that Board members were given a copy of the Board Policy Manual for their consideration of a vote this evening. She indicated that she would answer any questions that the Board might have. Renee asked Ericka when would the cultural events be added to the academic calendar. Ericka responded that the school calendar is legal and once it has been voted on, all of the cultural events will be added accordingly.

Renee inquired whether the calendar would be completed by the start of the next school year. Dr. Baynard also asked if it would be possible to have the calendar reconciled by the summer retreat. He noted, in this way, the Board would have something to review by the beginning of the school year. Ericka responded that they would definitely be able to provide it by the time the summer retreat takes place. Dr. Baynard acknowledged that it would be great to have it a couple of months before the school year starts for any discussions that may be needed. Dr. Baynard turned the meeting back to Greg for the Specialized Services Report.

Specialized Services, Angela Dennis

Greg provided the report on behalf of Angela

ESY Notification

Greg reported that the Extended School Year notifications went out to all parents on April 23rd. He also advised that all of their summer

programs will run concurrently which includes ESY instruction as well as HASA. He advised that there will be three separate groups in the building this summer.

Student Records

Greg reported that they continue to audit the student records to ensure that they remain in compliance across the board. He also advised that the unannounced teacher observations are occurring with special education teachers, as well as, their school based counselors. He noted that they are in the second cycle of their unannounced formal observations. Greg then turned the meeting over to Michelle to give the 2021-2022 Budget presentation.

Before presenting Dr. Baynard asked if there was a possibility that some of the COVID related funds could be used for the HASA program since that grant would be running out. Michelle indicated that the ESSER II funds do allow for summer programming.

Business and Finance, Michelle Thornton, CFO

Michelle began the power point presentation by sharing her screen and reviewing the budget for the 2021-2022 school year.

Review of the budget process

Michele advised members that she and Greg began the budget process by reviewing the strategic plan in December. She reported that they look at the strategic plan in consideration of the needs of Harambee and then bring in other executive leaders from their respective departments. Together, they examine all needs both current and forecasted. From there, a budget and narrative is developed.

The next part of the budget process is a presentation to the Finance Committee for review and discussion in March. She then informed members that the final budget approval process is to present the budget to the Board, who then has 30 days to review, question and vote to approve it with the understanding that the execution date is on July 1. Michele noted that there might be some adjustments to the budget because Harambee has not received their per pupil rate yet. She advised that the State is still working on rates; therefore, the budget might be changed once they receive the announcement. Any adjustments in the per pupil rate will be adjusted in the budget as well.

Overview

Michele reported that one of their main areas of focus for the 2021 school year has been student enrollment. She indicated that they pushed the capacity and increased enrollment. She advised that Talent Acquisition was another focus as well. She informed members that they increased talent acquisition of teachers, leaders and academic coaches. They made sure that they allocated dollars to highly qualified and certified teachers along with academic coaches. She stated that this was the first year that they have had 3 fully released coaches. They also focused on work around the facility with respect to doors, security and technology.

Budget Assumptions

Michelle moved to explaining budget assumptions. She reported that 590 students is the number that they will work around. And within that number there are approximately sixty (60) Special Education students that are embedded in the budget, along with about sixty (60) out of district (county) families. She reported that their targeted number of students is 620, but actual student enrollment is 590. Additionally, the budget assumes a 1% decrease in the per pupil rate. Michelle also pointed out that they continue to participate in the state retirement program for teachers and staff (PSERS), which carries a hefty rate at 34.9%. While the PA state program is costly for the organization they have staff that are enrolled in the plan and therefore, have to continue it. Michelle pointed out as well, that many of their Harambee staff members are not participants in the state plan because about four years ago, Harambee began to offer a 403B plan that is less costly to the organization. She mentioned that the ESSERII funds of 2.5 million for this year would mainly be focused on facilities projects.

Michelle continued to point out key areas in the budget with members and shared details of budgeted items and revenue streams. She also encouraged the Board to review information surrounding House Bill 272. She indicated that she would include a link where they could find information on the bill. She highlighted the fact that the bill could pose a threat to Charter schools and has asked Sandra (Harambee's Government Liaison) to conduct a presentation on the Bill. She illuminated the fact that if passed, these new laws would probably tighten the function of Charter Schools and reduce funding, especially

as it relates to Special Education funding. She advised that School Districts are asking that they receive a more equitable funding system, and asking for more transparency around Charter School Board meetings and staff salaries. She stated that there is a list of things in House Bill 272 that they need to be planning for.

Next steps

Michelle proposed that all members review and digest the information that has been presented. She advised that she is available for any questions via email, telephone, or one-to one. She informed members that she would be sending articles related to House Bill 272 by email for the Board to review, along with the budget in hopes that the Board would be ready to vote at the next Board meeting. Dr. Baynard asked Michelle to include tonight's presentation along with the budget, so that Board members can review it over the course of the next thirty days.

Dr. Baynard opened the floor to members for any questions about the budget. He then gave the floor to Greg and asked if there was anything that he would like to cover regarding ACT 55. Greg informed members that they would have additional information, as it relates to Act 55 for Board consideration in next month's meeting. He advised members that he would also like to cover it in a four (4) hour block of time at the summer retreat.

Action Items

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for votes on the following three items;

Motion: To accept the 2021-2022 academic calendar
Board member Renee made a motion to accept the academic calendar with the contingency that the cultural aspects will be added. Board member Donna seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Motion: To accept revisions to the Board policies as submitted
Board member Donna made a motion to accept, Board member Jan seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Board member Charis seconded the motion. All were in favor, none opposed

Approval AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 2021.