

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter
School
Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

August 5th 2020
Public Board Meeting via ZOOM
6:00-8:00 P.M.

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 via Zoom

Meeting Called to Order

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

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Visitors were introduced and stated their names, titles and purpose

Mrs. Love, parent of Simiya Love

Mrs. Haja Kamara parent of Machei Donzo

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard

Renee Whitby

C.Wade Mosely

Charis Jackson

Joseph Foster

Lakiesha Creighton

Donna Holmes Lockett

Jan Gillespie-Walton prospective Board member

Board members absent:

Larry Bell

Marirose Roach

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon CEO

Michelle Thornton CFO

Ericka Washington	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Sara Ferguson	Assistant Principal of Instruction
Angela Dennis	Assistant VP of Specialized Services

Dr. Maurice Baynard, Board Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He asked visitors and parents to introduce themselves. Each parent gave their names and the names of their children that attend Harambee Institute. He asked the senior leadership team to introduce themselves. All of the senior leadership team was introduced and stated their titles. Dr. Baynard turned everyone's attention to the June 24th meeting minutes and asked if there were any addendums or corrections. There were none. Dr. Baynard accepted a motion to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Board member Wade and so moved by the board chairman.

Motion: Approve June 24, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

Approval AYE: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Dr. Baynard asked Ericka Washington, Assistant Principal of School Operations, to present on behalf of Gregory Shannon, CEO. Gregory is logged into the meeting, but driving while attending. Ericka introduced his "A Year in Review" presentation and discussed highlights of the presentation as they relate to the strategic plan. She highlighted items that the administrative team successfully completed in the 2019-2020 school year beginning with the following:

Business and Finance

- Increase in Human Resources data using the digital medium; the portal allows for timely and accurate data for reporting, making sure that they are in compliance with all local state and federal mandates.
- Submitted financial audit on time and met compliance with no findings. This is an item that has been in the ACE report and has changed the rating from "does not meet standard" to meets standard, a result of the CFO and her staff's hard work.

Instruction

- Academic Achievement- they have fully implemented a formal coaching model and implementation of the formal teacher evaluation model with enhanced use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Also included in this model are the quick visit teacher observations and the informal teacher evaluations, which allow teachers the opportunity to receive formative assessments. This also gives teachers a chance to improve their practices prior to formal evaluations, which are conducted twice a year, one at midpoint and again at the end of the year. They have also implemented a formal coaching model and now have three coaches. 1) A mathematics coach 2) An ELA coach and 3) A cultural coach. With the coaches they will be able to provide job imbedded professional development for teachers in the classroom.

School Operations

- Successfully implemented 2019-2020 school lottery system for the upcoming 2020-2021. They conducted the lottery before any other Charter school in the city with the goal of expanding their enrollment. They also met and exceeded enrollment capacity.
- Successfully implemented a one-to-one device initiative with Chrome book distribution to every student for the 2020-2021 SY. This initiative was originally slated to be achieved within their three year plan, but due to Covid-19 they were able to implement the initiative this year.
- The Facilities master plan has been completed providing Harambee with a comprehensive building assessment of the infrastructure at 640 N 66th Street.

Specialized Services

- Fully compliant with special education files according to the October 1, child count and child find policies and procedures. They also have ELL procedures and administrative processes in place if an English learner wants to enroll. They now have the appropriate programs, policies and procedures to service those children.

Ericka asked the CEO if he wanted to add anything to the presentation that was just provided. Greg had nothing to add to the report but indicated that he is extremely proud of his leadership team and all of their hard work. He also acknowledged and thanked Board members for their leadership and support during their successful first year.

Dr. Baynard then opened the floor for Board members to ask questions about the leadership report. Renee Whitby asked the team to identify the culture coach and describe the job description for the position. Greg indicated that Meghan would serve as the culture coach and lead cultural efforts and activities throughout the building. Renee also asked if the current process would work virtually since they are under Covid-19 guidelines. Greg specified that they would continue to stand and participate in circle virtually. He said that all of the cultural norms and practices would remain in place as they plan to make every effort to keep all practices in place just as they were in the brick and mortar building.

Dr. Baynard reminded everyone that there had been previous plans for a cultural summit that would have been led by Renee and attended by the Board Chair and Harambee staff, but due to Covid-19 the summit was postponed. He noted that the cultural topic was also discussed during this year's retreat with staff and will be continued even though everyone is not in the building in the same way as they were before. He also advised, that as a group, they will be coming together to work on this initiative.

Wade stated that he also had a question in line with Renee's. He asked 1) if the day-to-day role of the coaches could be defined 2) Are the coaches are out of the classroom completely, and 3) how the success of their input is quantified.

Sara explained that the role would support teachers and staff. The coaches will be going into the classrooms conducting observations and compiling data to identify trends. They will address trends with professional development tools. She shared that the coaches' professional skill level will help teachers one-on-one in the classroom by modeling instructional practices. She stated that they are also adding cultural components to their formal and informal observation tools and pointed out that all of the coaches are teachers and their presence will help to build the skill level of the entire staff. This will also allow for more eyes and ears across the building in terms of practice and fidelity. She added that the coaches will be crucial in helping Harambee move through the virtual component for the rest of the year.

Renee indicated that she would be interested in seeing what the cultural evaluation tool looks like in terms of what is being looked for culturally from teachers. Dr. Baynard asked Renee whether it would be a better recommendation to add the job description of the Cultural Coach and read the informal and formal observation tools, or have Sara take time to provide a presentation with an overview that describes the tools at a Board meeting. He said in this way, questions could be raised. Renee agreed that a presentation to the Board would be best. Sara agreed that she would be happy to walk the Board through the entire evaluation protocol. Dr. Baynard asked if there could be a short video of one of the teachers so that the Board would understand what they are looking for and how they evaluate. Sara agreed to work out the logistics with the technology squad.

Charis asked if the Danielson Framework could be included in the presentation, and Greg stated that they would mail her a copy as promised of the Danielson Framework inclusive of all of the domains. Dr. Baynard noted that Charis could review the information and perhaps discuss it in more detail at a separate Board training.

Dr. Baynard acknowledged that there were two (2) bullets that he wanted to highlight from the Year End Report and give La La's to the team. The first, that this year the staff successfully launched their first "Mentally Gifted Program" under Angela. They have identified three (3) students who have gifted IEP's, and they are now able to provide them with mentally gifted services. Dr. Baynard also acknowledged that under Angela's oversight, Harambee drastically reduced the out-of-school placements from eight to two, which speaks to the extraordinary job that she and her team have done.

Dr. Baynard asked Michelle, CFO, if there was anything that she wanted to report. She reported that last quarter they closed the year-end with an increase in assets. They started the audit process last week and remain on target and on schedule to date. Dr. Baynard also inquired whether there was an update on the Charter Renewal Process. Ericka indicated that the application was completed and submitted. Harambee is now waiting to hear if there are any questions regarding the file submission or the application. The site visit is scheduled for October, and they are waiting to hear what that would look like virtually.

Old Business

Dr. Baynard asked those who attended the Leadership Retreat to give some reflection on their experience. Most of the members commented on how well the retreat was handled despite having to conduct it virtually. The members felt that it was engaging and very worthwhile. The staff indicated that there were concerns in the beginning, especially about technology; however, the IT department did a phenomenal job and everything worked out smoothly. The turnout was great, both with those who were able to attend in person and virtually. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship and camaraderie. The hope is that everyone will attend next year in person, not virtually. Board members would also like to see that parents are aligned with the efforts and engaged in the day-to-day operations of Harambee.

New Business

Dr. Baynard acknowledged that there are working groups in finance, education, infrastructure and parent groups. He hopes that those involved will take the time between now and the next Board meeting to meet in smaller groups to focus on things like culture in the time of Covid-19, along with thinking through where they want to move with finances over the next few years. Dr. Baynard also hopes that there will be a discussion at the next Board meeting in September around what the work has been like over the past two months and what their plans are for moving forward.

Parental Concerns

Dr. Baynard inquired whether there were any public concerns from anyone on the call. There were no concerns

Other Business

Dr. Baynard acknowledged that Jan Walton, a prospective board member was observing the meeting and joined the members on the call. He wanted to give her the opportunity to say a few words as she contemplates becoming a Board member. Mrs. Walton spoke briefly about her skills for the position and the importance of equity. She also spoke about her recommendation of Greg Shannon for the position of CEO for Harambee. She spoke highly of Greg and his understanding of the needs of the school.

Dr. Baynard noted that there were three action items up for a vote.

- Act 13 Waiver
- Revised 2020-2021 Academic Calendar

- 2020-2021 Code of Conduct/Parent and Student Handbook

He inquired if there were any questions for the leadership team regarding the action items, and if not, he would entertain a motion to adopt all three of the items as presented. Board member Wade inquired as to how the handbook gets rolled out to students and whether the Handbook is a new item or an item that needs to be amended. Erica noted that the Handbook is not anything new and mentioned that the Board had voted to approve it last year. She reminded the Board that the 2020 ACE report mentioned the need for a minor revision. She pointed out that there has always been a Handbook and the revision before the Board now takes into account the suggested correction from the 2020 ACE report. She also stated that the handbook is announced to students at the beginning of the school year and is posted on Harambee's website as required.

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for a motion with regard to the three documents and the adoption of them as they have been presented.

- Act 13 Waiver
- Revised 2020-2021 Academic Calendar
- 2020-2021 Code of Conduct/Parent and Student Handbook

Board member Wade motioned, seconded by Board member Charis. All in favor so moved.

Motion:

Approval AYE: 7 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Motion:

Dr. Baynard entertained a motion to dismiss the Board meeting, the motion was seconded by Wade Mosley, all agreed, meeting dismissed

Adjourn Board Meeting

The Board meeting was adjourned at 7:59 P.M.

The next scheduled Board meeting will be held on Wednesday September 30, 2020.