

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School

Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, August 31, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday August 31st 2022 via Zoom at 6:30p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Joseph Foster
Donna Holmes- Lockett
C. Wade Mosely
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Charis Jackson
Renee Whitby

Board Members Absent:

Lakiesha Creighton
Larry Bell
Monique Braxton

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
Nakia Brown	Assistant Principal of Instruction
David Rosario	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Danielle Bryant	Executive Assistant to the CEO
Stephon Fitzpatrick	Prospective new Board member
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Libation (Mama Renee Whitby)

Libation was lead by cultural leader and Board member Renee Whitby. She asked if she could add a quote to start the meeting for the beginning of the new school year. Board Chair, Dr. Maurice Baynard, granted her permission and she quoted

“ Faith is believing that the African centered approach is a secret to our success as a people, because if we believe in ourselves we can overcome any challenges”

Roll Call

Board Chair Maurice Baynard 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.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Stephon Fitzpatrick a prospective new Board member introduced himself and stated that his purpose for joining the meeting is to serve as a Board member for Harambee.

Greg introduced Stephon to members and asked him to speak about himself and his current role. Mr. Fitzpatrick shared that his current role is the Executive Director of the PA Commission for Agriculture Education Excellence. He shared with members that he is responsible for developing a state wide Agricultural Education Program for STEM and Environmental Science.

He stated that he travels state wide to handle different initiatives that include engagement with legislators, workforce scholarships, funding and grants. He said that he also serves as a National Officer for (MANORS) Minorities and Agricultural Natural Resources and Related Sciences. They are one of the largest minority focused agricultural organizations that focuses on the leadership and professional development for minority students to pursue a career in the agricultural industry. He told members that he is in his final year of his doctoral program at The University of Maryland Eastern Shore and a triple HBCU attendee committed to the HBCU mission.

Review of the June Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Dr. Baynard Board Chairman announced that the Board meeting minutes from the June 29th Board meeting were approved and ratified by Board members on July 26th 2022.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Dr. Baynard Board Chairman turned the meeting over to Greg for leadership reports.

Organizational Leadership

Spring Fundraising Event

Greg stated that he would like to begin with the Spring Fundraising Event and asked Danielle, Executive Assistant to share her screen. Greg shared a video that captured moments of the first Stem panel discussion that took place at the Pyramid Club. The event was held as a panel discussion with some of the leading

individuals in the Stem community. In the video members were able to see the engagement and interactions with many of the leaders and student representatives. Greg gave thanks to all who participated and supported the event.

Annual Leadership Retreat

Greg reported that they are continuing with the theme of becoming a more data driven and systems aligned organization. He said that the executive leadership team is off to a great start through their professional development series with both faculty and staff.

School Opening and Reorganization 2022-2023

Greg reported that the ESSER dollars allowed them to add additional instructional staff to the classrooms. He said that they have re-organized to focus on their data and provide their students with small group instruction, tailored to address the standards they need in supporting students individually. They have differentiated their coaching so that each member of their staff, both general education and special education will have an individual coach plan developed for them. This will create better teachers thereby creating better students.

Re-opening

Greg reported that they are in the midst of re-opening and they are off to a great start. He said that they opened the year in a very orderly, efficient and organized manner. He reported that Dr. Baynard was on site today and had an opportunity to see the students in action and engage with them.

COVID 19 Updated Guidance and Plan

Greg reported that they have updated their guidance around the COVID 19 protocols to align with the latest information that has come out of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. The information was shared with staff during the professional development training and will be shared with parents this week as they open school.

Greg concluded his reports and opened the floor for questions. Dr. Baynard asked him to elaborate a little more on the guidance coming from the district. Greg stated that the guidance begins with returning them to school as they once were. He said that the notion of social distancing is no longer in play and they can return to cooperative grouping and cooperative learning in the classrooms. He stated that if a student or staff member does test positive for COVID they no longer have to quarantine the entire class or entire grade anymore. He said that they sent out release forms to parents to give permission to test students. However, if anyone should test positive either student or staff, they will go home for 5 days and on the 6th day as long as they are not symptomatic they can return with a KN-95 or N-95 mask.

Operations, David Rosario

David reported that after his hire they were very facilities focused.

Facilities Operations for School Opening 2022-2023

He reported that they focused on cleaning the building and bought a dumpster to clear out areas of the building to open it up to have more clarity. He noted that they now have offsite storage so that they can work on a rotational system to bring things back to the building as they are needed. He said that they are working with maintenance and the contracted staff to be sure that the school is very clean and open. They have also filled the Facilities Manager position, which had come to him as a priority.

Distribution of Technology

David reported that they continued their technology uplifting with two large smart boards that were installed in two identified classrooms. They have shared all of the technology with teachers as well. They are preparing students with chrome book technology and getting the parents cooperation through proper usage as they are distributed. David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked how they are managing with school busing this year. Greg answered and said that they have not experienced any problems so far. They are running a total of four routes and all of the routes for Harambee are built and have been placed in the system with no problems to date.

Curriculum and Instruction, Nakia Brown

Nakia reported that as they prepared to open the school they were in a season of inventory. She said that they had the opportunity to get all of their consumable books re-ordered which have already been delivered to the school. She noted that they have moved to a more expanded version of I-Ready, which is I-Ready classroom that will allow the teachers and students more access to technology platforms.

Nakia reported that they have also added I-Ready Intervention for reading so that they can work on individualized plans based on the student's diagnostics and standards. She reported that they are still using HMH journeys for reading and all of their consumable books have been distributed to the classrooms and teachers. She said that this year there is an increased investment around writing and they are implementing writing portfolios in grades 3-8. In September they will have professional development training on how to effectively create writing portfolios in all of the different genres of writing.

Summer Institute 2022

Nakia reported that this year they led rigorous summer workshops specifically in the area of Instruction. She noted that they held the Harambee Way workshop to ensure that they are still in line with their cultural practices and rituals. They also had a workshop on lesson planning, moving from mundane lesson plans to assessment plans, which provide more formative data more frequently. She explained that this allows them to have access to the teacher's data on a weekly basis so that they

know how the students are doing in specific topics.

Assessments

Nakia reported that they would be moving to an assessment plan system in October, where they will still create lesson plans, but will be responsible for creating data as well. She said that they will still be using the revised Danielson Framework and will post their PSSA target in the teachers lounge so that both teachers and students will always know their PSSA targets thereby creating a system of ownership and accountability.

Upcoming Assessments

Nakia reported that they would be using I-Ready for their upcoming assessments. She said that they hope to start their assessments beginning on September 6th but have created a window from the week of September 12th through September 30th in ELA, Math and Writing.

Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Dr. Baynard asked what happened to all of the devices that were given to students during the pandemic. Greg responded and said that they were collected during the spring because most of them needed software updates. He said that they are now re-issuing the same chrome books back to the students in the fall and all new students will receive new chrome books.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Deleah reported that during the Leadership Retreat she presented a draft of the Operational MTSS Handbook. The handbook was reviewed with the Leadership team and the final draft was reviewed with the entire community and then handed out. She informed members that the handbook will be available electronically, as they create Google classroom for this information along with all of the other forms.

2022-23

Deleah reported that they have been working on creating a program for students to provide supports to meet their needs. This year, they have added two (2) complex needs classrooms servicing their younger students in grades K-2 and their older students in grades 3-6. She said that they are providing additional support for their complex needs students using a program called Unique Learning Systems. Deleah reported that they also have four (4) Special Education teachers now to provide support as well.

Deleah noted that this year, they have learning support Math and learning support ELA for grades 6-8. She said that they are using research-based assessments to support student's progress over time. In addition, they are using IEP writer to help them assure that they have firm IEP's, 504's and gifted IEP's for students.

Deleah concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Dr. Baynard asked how many students have IEP's and of that number how many are gifted IEP's.

Deleah stated that last year they ended the school year with sixty-nine (69) students that received specialized services and four (4) of those students were gifted and one (1) was dually identified. Dr. Baynard asked how they assess students to identify the gifted students. Deleah said that they generally start to screen students at 3rd grade using a standardized assessment tool that the school psychologist administers.

Business, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that the finance department has been busy closing the books from last year and completing their year-end reporting, along with working on their audit.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that they have brought on twenty (20) new staff members since June, which is the largest group in ten years. She noted that another initiative has been to bring on lunch aides that are scheduled to come in from 10 am -2pm. She said that this will allow their CRT team to work with students from a behavioral perspective in small groups.

Michelle reported that they are also working with a new staffing agency this year through one of their parents. She indicated that they have hired great teachers, paraprofessionals and lunch aides through this new agency that are high quality staff. She noted that they are at a 64% rate of certification for all teachers and 72% rate of certification for core content teachers. Michelle informed members that another positive note is the increase in the number of males that have been hired. She reported that 6 of the 20 new hires are males leaving the total population at 75% female, and 25% male.

21st Century Grant

Michelle reported that they received their 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant award for Cohort 11. She explained that they will receive \$500,000 dollars per year over a period of five years. She said that they met with one of the representatives for the grant and they were told that they had one of the best applications. Dr. Kelly Sloan was one of the grant writers that helped them with the application and they are hoping to have her as part of their grant writing process for future grants.

Highlights

Michelle reported that they will kick off in October and are expanding to service kindergarten. They are increasing the number that they are able to service from 200 students to 300 students. She indicated that they are also working on expanding various partnerships.

Michelle informed members that they are very busy with the audit and are mostly on schedule to meet their December deadline. She said that they are closing the books and are looking positive from a financial standpoint. She said that they hope to be

rolling out the financial reports at the next Board meeting. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions and comments. Dr. Baynard commended Michelle and her collaborators on an amazing job obtaining the Grant award for Cohort 11. Greg made 2 final comments. He informed members that there was a consortium of African centered Charter Schools that has resumed and they have agreed to meet quarterly. He announced that Harambee will host the next meeting that is tentatively scheduled for October 12th at The Pyramid Club.

Greg also noted that they would like to bring back Parent University. He said that they would be reaching out to their University partners to bring professors to Harambee so that parents will be able to take college courses in the evening. He would like those courses to revolve around Child Development. Greg concluded all reports for the evening and turned the meeting over to Dr. Baynard. He opened the floor for any additional questions or comments. He informed members that he had a few items to highlight and would then proceed with business for the Board.

- Dr. Baynard highlighted the Harambee Website and said that it really represents and uplifts the type of school that Harambee is representative of. He encouraged members to go to the website and witness how dynamic it is.
- Dr. Baynard commended staff on how clean he found the school building while visiting. He said that the school is immaculate and the student's behavior was commendable. He informed members that he witnessed the sound of learning first hand. He gave KUDOS to everyone that is working to create a wonderful environment of learning. Greg noted that Danielle was responsible for interfacing and helping to design the website.

New Business:

Dr. Baynard announced that Board member Monique Braxton has issued her resignation from the Board. He said that he was informed that she will become the media spokesperson for The School District of Philadelphia.

Dr. Baynard also informed members that they have not received a letter from Board member Lakiesha Creighton, however in adherence of the Board By-laws they have sent her a letter indicating that because her attendance for last year and this year, the Board must move forward without her. They hope to find other areas of participation for her.

Dr. Baynard announced that the Board will vote on Stephon Fitzpatrick's membership as a Board member at the next Board meeting in September.

Dr. Baynard noted that the last item for this evening is the recommendation that Board members return to in person Board meetings. He suggested that sometime between now and December and January and June, an in person meeting would take place.

Dr. Baynard concluded the meeting with informing members that they will receive an email from him regarding 1:1 interviews that Barbara McNeil conducted with the Board. He stated that they should get together soon to hear a broad scope of her findings. He suggested that they meet between now and the next Board meeting, maybe on a Saturday morning. He said that he will send an email asking for their times to meet with Ms. McNeil. Dr. Baynard opened the floor for further questions and comments.

Board member Joseph said that he thinks that the 1:1 meetings with Barbara McNeil will be beneficial to the Board going forward.

He also suggested that once ASA is affirmed that Dr. Baynard come to the ASA meeting because it is beneficial to get together with the other schools to share. He said that they want to be sure that all of the schools are good at the same things in order to build capacity in the entire African centered community. He said that great ideas coming out of all of the schools can be beneficial to Harambee.

Old Business:

None

Action Items:

None

Public Concerns:

There were no public concerns

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

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

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 28, 2022

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison