

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 30, 2022

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday March 30th 2022 via Zoom 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.
by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Donna Holmes- Lockett
Renee Whitby
Larry Bell
C. Wade Mosely
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Charis Jackson
Monique Braxton

Board Members Absent:

Lakiesha Creighton
Joseph Foster

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Ericka Washington	Assistant Principal of School Operations
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Sara Ferguson	Assistant Principal of Instruction
Deleah Archer	Assistant Principal of Specialized Services
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Libation (Mama Renee Whitby)

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

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Visitors were asked to state their names and titles for the record.

Nakia Brown introduced herself and explained her role at Harambee and informed members that she would provide a presentation on the Harambee Black Shirts.

Danielle Bryant Introduced herself as the CEO's Assistant and indicated that she was in attendance to satisfy her educational courses.

Roll Call

Board member and Chairman 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.

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

Board Chair Maurice Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the February meeting minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. Board member Larry stated that there was a typographical error in the spelling of Imhotep Charter School. The error was noted and to be corrected. Board member Wade made a motion to accept the February minutes as presented with the condition that the spelling be corrected. Board member Larry seconded the motion, all were in favor, none were opposed, and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

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

Greg announced that he would be presenting highlights from each individual department. He informed members that Sara would provide a presentation on Instructional Data that highlights diagnostic assessments. In addition, there would be a presentation from Nakia Brown Instructional Coach, highlighting Student Leadership with a presentation on the Harambee Black Shirts and their community service project with Philabundance.

He also reported that Sara Ferguson would be leaving her position, as Assistant Principal of Instruction and that Nakia Brown would be assuming the role officially on July 1. Greg and the Board wished Sara all the best in her new endeavors.

Organizational Leadership

Spring Fundraising Event

Greg reported that they were scheduled for a Spring Fundraising Event, but it was recommended that they move the Gala to the fall, still keeping their time line of 50 years of service to the community. He indicated that they would still hold the spring event but are planning it as a panel discussion with some of the leading individuals in the Stem community within the Philadelphia and Metropolitan area. The event will be held on Thursday May 19th from 5-7p.m. at the Pyramid Club. It will be a two-hour discussion with Dr. Deborah Crabbe a Cardiologist from Temple University, Dr. Darryl Williams from the Franklin Institute, Mr. Jeremiah White, President and Board

Chair for Community College of Philadelphia and Dr. James McPherson from the Summit Medical Group, Cardio-Thoracic Surgery Specialist in Lung Cancer. The discussion will focus on developing a community health agenda for the 21st century.

Greg thanked the members of the Gala committee, which included Board members Jan, Renee, Donna and Dr. Baynard. Greg noted that the price of the tickets will be \$200.00 per ticket and he is requesting that each member of the executive team and each Board member purchase at least two tickets. He also indicated that it would be great if each of them could sponsor a student, so that they would have the opportunity to participate in the event. Greg indicated that they are hoping for at least 50 participants and he asked members to review the details in their Board packets. Greg informed members that Danielle is currently working on invitations and all of the information and invitations would be going out electronically within the next 48 hours. The program will be set up on the website so that individuals can go on and make their contributions. There are also sponsorship packages. They are asking each Board member to cascade the information out to all of their contacts and colleagues so that they will have a robust evening on May 19th.

Property Acquisition

Greg reported that they are still continuing their dialogue with the developer and real estate broker regarding the property at 6710 Haverford Avenue. They spoke with the real estate agents this morning and are currently in the process of reviewing the financials and developing a financial business and marketing plan. He indicated that it is their intent to target daycares in Delaware County. They have identified two daycares and are looking for a third to be able to attract children from Delaware County. They need at least 40-45 students to be able to fund the property at 6710 Haverford Avenue. Greg noted that he and Board members Wade, Larry and Michelle, CFO toured the facility a month ago and that the property has 17,000 square feet available. He stated that their architect has confirmed that the renderings and drawings indicate that the property is in good order.

School Operations

Greg reported that a vote is needed this evening on their 2022-2023 Academic School Calendar. The calendar is a 200-day staff calendar with 180 student days built in. They have broken it into 45 days per marking period and have added Juneteenth as an official holiday. He asked that the Board review it for a vote this evening.

Technology Master Plan

Greg reported that they have developed a Technology Master Plan and he recommends that they present it to the Board at the April Board meeting.

Curriculum and Instruction, Sara Ferguson

Greg reported that they had an official academic walkthrough where they conducted instructional rounds in every classroom. He noted that they had a cross functional

team of staff that conducted the walkthrough for every classroom in the building. He said that they noticed that in all of the areas of compliance the data was very strong in terms of Instructional Compliance. He said that their area of growth is around rigor and higher order thinking and that the walkthrough provided robust data for their next steps and opportunities for growth.

Specialized Services

Greg reported that they now have a formalized MTSS program. He said that under the leadership of Dr. Archer they have an official program that provides support and intervention for students around instruction, behavior and attendance. He noted that they are happy to report that they have a very functional and structured MTSS program that provides levels of support and intervention for children before they reach tier three and are identified for special education services.

Greg opened the floor for questions from the leadership reports that he presented. He reminded members that every item that has been discussed is a part of their Board packets and further questions are welcomed. Board member Renee inquired about the cultural events that are not present on the School Calendar. Greg explained that each year they have to create two calendars, the first for the purpose of uploading into Epicenter and on to the School District of Philadelphia. He noted that the first is the official calendar that goes to the Charter School office and to the School District of Philadelphia. Once that has been submitted, he noted that the second calendar, which outlines cultural events, gets super imposed over the official calendar and once combined, it is then released and will be going out next week.

Dr. Baynard asked if it would be possible to see both parallel calendars next month so that they can see the cultural events that are outlined along with the official calendar. Greg responded that they would provide both at the next meeting. Dr. Baynard suggested that they use Google calendar to plug in all of the cultural events as well as Board meetings, so that members have access to see month over month what is taking place.

Board member Wade asked Greg if in the discussions that took place today with the developer, were any time lines discussed. Greg responded that the developer's time line is as soon as possible, but they need to be able to negotiate their terms around Harambee's timelines. He said that there have been some discussions around a seven-year and ten-year lease. They have even discussed the timeline falling within the time of their five-year charter with some provisions. He stated that they are having those discussions presently and it is their intention to get a counter proposal back to the developer within the next 24-48 hours.

Business & Finance, Michelle Thornton

Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle for the Business and Finance report. Michelle reported that she would have just a few highlights this evening

Budget 2022-2023

Michelle reported that they are in the process of finalizing the 2022-2023 budget. According to their timeline they expected to present the document to the finance committee during the meeting on Monday, but they had to delay it because she needed a little more time. She indicated that she will present it to the committee by the end of this week.

Current year Budget

Michelle reported that they have not received any official word on the mid year adjustments that typically take place with the state regarding their per pupil rate. She said that while there have not been any official announcements about the rate adjustment; they have been hearing that it would be a downward adjustment at a significant rate of 12% although nothing is official yet. She indicated that she would be keeping her ears open and would keep members posted with recommendations on how they plan to adjust. She encouraged everyone to stay tuned and she would share the information with members as soon as they receive it.

21st Century Application

Michelle reported that they submitted the application for Cohort 11. And as mentioned in the last meeting, the 21st century grant for Cohort 8 that ran for six years expired on December 31, 2021. She informed members that the Cohort 11 grant would begin October 2022 through September 2027. She noted that there are some significant changes in the Cohort 11 grant that differ from the Cohort 8 grant. She explained that with Cohort 8 they were awarded \$350,000. However, with Cohort 11 they have applied for the full amount of \$500,000. This grant also allows them to include kindergarten students, so they have added 100 kindergarten students from Harambee. The other highlight is that the grant allows for the inclusion of their partners, which include the following:

- Big Picture Alliance
- Academy of Natural Sciences
- Drexel University
- The Philadelphia Clef Club
- Community College of Philadelphia
- Free Haven Farms
- Natural Lands
- Stroud Water Research Center

Michelle indicated that they are really excited about the grant application and have brought in a grant writer to help them with getting the application completed. They will know the final results on May 27th.

Michelle also made a special note and shared that on March 18th they had a visit from Stephon Fitzpatrick, the Executive Director of PA Commission for Agriculture Education Excellence. She shared that a representative conducted a tour of Harambee, provided a presentation and performed a reading to the

second graders along with presenting a classroom library. They also had media coverage, which surprised everyone. Greg mentioned that it is all captured on their new website where Mr. Fitzpatrick is prominently featured reading to second grade students in teacher Jasmine's class. He urged everyone to visit the site under the section entitled "In the News".

HR Report

Michelle noted that she would like to clarify one area of the HR report that is included in everyone's packet. She pointed to the section that speaks to staff certifications and indicated that there was a small section that was left out and could not be seen on the report. She expounded on the correction and clarified the actual number of certified teachers. Dr. Baynard asked Michelle if they are still continuing the practice of only hiring certified teachers. She stated that it has been a challenge to continue that practice, but they continue in their search for certified teachers. She also indicated that most of the teachers that they have now that are not certified are high quality teachers and are on a certification plan.

Presentation 1: The Harambee Black Shirts

Greg stated that he would like to highlight some of the wonderful things that the students at Harambee are involved in. He noted that teacher Nakia Brown would provide a brief presentation on the service project that the Student Leadership group "The Harambee Black Shirts" did in collaboration with Philabundance. He turned the meeting over to Nakia for the presentation.

Nakia shared her screen with members and shared that "The Harambee Black Shirts" are a dynamic group of students that exemplify the key elements of good character. They are the youth leadership ambassadors made up of a group of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. She highlighted that the mission of the group is to unify their school community by embodying the principles of the Nguzo Saba, and the rules of Maat in order to leave their community more beautiful and beneficial than they inherited it.

She also noted that Harambee's core mission includes the principles of Self Reliance, Community Building, Peer Mediation and Community Service. She shared her screen and highlighted the project that the students worked on in collaboration with Philabundance, to stamp out hunger in their community. They organized a canned food drive all on their own with 100% participation school wide. They were able to organize and provide a weekly tally of canned goods collected and ended up donating 1,370 LBS of food. Nakia finalized her presentation by sharing a video that the Student Leadership Group put together. She gave members the opportunity to hear from "The Harambee Black Shirts". The group shared a message to the Board and spoke about their work on the project. They ended their presentation with a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

Dr. Baynard and members applauded Nakia and the students on a wonderful project. Greg turned the meeting over to Sara Ferguson for her presentation on the Diagnostic Assessment Data.

Presentation 2: Diagnostic Assessment Data

Sara shared her screen and indicated that she would give a brief overview of the two Diagnostic Assessments. She said that it all begins with an assessment calendar in which they outline all of the timelines for the assessments. She informed members that the diagnostic assessments are administered in October, February and May and the summative assessments and the PSSA are beginning in April. She indicated that the ELA window opens on April 25th and closes on April 29th. The Math and Science window opens on May 2nd and closes on May 13th. She reported that the diagnostic assessments that they use are IXL Learning as their ELA assessment, which pinpoints student's grade level proficiency and the key ELA strands that take approximately 45 minutes to complete. She explained that based on the diagnostic results of the assessments, teachers can access action plans that identify skills to support students to fill any gaps in their skills.

Sara noted that for Math they use Ready Math Diagnostic, which provides teachers with a snapshot of student performance in all areas of math. Teachers are also provided with reports that detail the student's strengths and areas of need, to enable them to plan lessons to support students around learning and increasing their achievement. Ready Math also provides students with a personalized learning path based on their individual needs. Sara pointed to the charts in her presentation emphasizing the scores that show the percentages on or above grade level, below grade level and far below grade level in each category. She also pointed out on the charts, the average increases and decreases in each category between October and February and then the current placement distribution.

Dr. Baynard asked what was the total number of students represented in the population percentages in the report. Sara responded that she did not currently have that information, but would be happy to provide it later. She said she would work on those numbers to provide more detail. Dr. Baynard thanked her.

Sara moved to the next steps in the process after analyzing the Assessment Data. She reported that the CEO would hold balanced scorecard data review meetings with teachers, coaches and the Assistant Principal of Instruction. She noted that teachers analyze the data and complete data protocols to identify strengths and growth opportunities. She stated that skills deficits are addressed using intervention programs during their MTSS period and that teacher practices are also observed to ensure that growth opportunities are addressed and that teachers assess students skills to monitor their learning. She also noted that they make sure that their adjustments are all guided by the data that they review.

Sara added that there is another avenue that they are taking as well. She informed members that they have started their HITS (Harambee Intervention Team) team,

which identifies students that are on the cusp of proficiency. She emphasized the fact that they have some of their very proficient ELA teachers and Math teachers working with students to prepare them for testing along with other students in HASA that are also working on preparation for the PSSA.

She noted that the recent data that came out from the PSSA and state wide indicated that 37% of students scored proficient or advanced in Math and 55% scored proficient or advanced in ELA and 63% scored proficient or advanced in Science across the state. Sara said that according to the data, the participation rate dropped from 97% to 71% in the last administration of the PSSA. She noted that there were significant decreases in proficiency due to many students being out of school during Covid-19 and many schools not being in person when the PSSA's were administered. Sara also stated that they are working hard to bridge those skills gaps and as many deficits in skills that they can. She reiterated that they are working with the student's families to engage them in the process and they are having students to take ownership over their own learning. Sara concluded her report and opened the floor to questions from members.

Board member Renee asked if there is data on what the percentages were before Covid-19, compared to the current data that was just provided. Sara said that she would have to go back to their partners to obtain that information. She also stated that the diagnostics that they administered while they were virtual were "a little sketchy" because students were at home working on those diagnostics and they could not secure the test environment to determine whether students were fully engaged or determine whether the students were receiving assistance, therefore, they could not guarantee the purity of it.

Board member Jan asked if they are looking at anything during the summer that will address or remediate the learning loss that has taken place. Sara said that yes they will be running a robust summer program to address those needs. Dr. Baynard commented that they couldn't ignore the fact that the Math disparity is currently at critical levels and that moving forward it must be a priority. Sara noted that the CEO has some things in mind to address the problem. All reports were concluded and Dr. Baynard opened the floor for comments and questions.

Sara thanked everyone for the opportunity that she was afforded at Harambee and assured the Board that she is leaving Harambee in capable hands. Dr. Baynard commended Sara on behalf of the Board for an amazing tenure at Harambee. He thanked her for the serious and excellent work that she brought to her role for both students and teachers.

Board member Larry indicated that he received an email from a disgruntled person and inquired about how the complaints are typically handled. Dr. Baynard responded that depending on the nature of the question, if it is in regard to employment or if it requires a decision at the executive level he will refer it to Board member Jan and Board member Joe. He said that they should to follow up with the

person and then connect with Harambee Leadership and come back to make a recommendation to the Board if there is further action that needs to be taken.

Action Items:

Vote- 2022-2023 School Calendar

Motion: Board member Monique made a motion to accept the School Calendar as it has been presented. Board member Larry seconded the motion, all were in favor and none were opposed.

Approval: 8 AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Old and New Business

Board Officer Nominations (Larry Bell)

Board member Larry Bell took the floor to discuss Board Leadership. He indicated that the bylaws specify three Board officer positions. 1) The Board Chair 2) The Board Secretary and 3) The Board Treasurer. He indicated that they are required to elect those Board officers every two years. He informed members that the bylaws should spell out what each role requires and if not he would provide the information and send it out to all of the Board members within the next two weeks. Larry said that typically they would hold nominations but in the interest of time, he would be looking for self-nominations and reaching out to those that have an interest. Larry advised members that they would need to appoint the new officers in the June Board meeting. He opened the floor for questions from members.

Board member Wade asked if he would be looking for a closed slate and a vote in June. Larry said that they don't necessarily have to have a closed slate but would first determine if there is a lot of interest and proceed from that point. Board member Wade also asked if there are term limits. Larry indicated that he would have to check the bylaws to determine that. Board Chair Maurice responded and said that there are term limits and that they are very long. He said that he would share that clause in the bylaws with everyone. Dr. Baynard concluded the meeting and accepted a motion to adjourn.

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

Approval: 8 AYE: 8 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 27th 2022 at 6:30 P.M.

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison