

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

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## Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> 2023

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup> 2023 via Zoom at 6:32 p.m.

### **Open Session**

#### **Meeting Called to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Board member Larry Bell

#### **Board Members Present:**

Larry Bell  
Jan Gillespie- Walton  
Shawn Blue  
C. Wade Mosely  
Renee Whitby  
Charis Jackson  
Maurice Baynard

#### **Board Members Absent:**

Donna Holmes Lockett  
Joseph Foster

#### **Others Present:**

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

#### **Libation (Board member Renee Whitby)**

Libation was lead by Cultural leader and Board member Renee Whitby.

### **Roll Call**

Board member Larry Bell 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.

### **Visitors**

There were no visitors present at this meeting

### **Review of the October 25<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)**

Record of votes for the October 25<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were read into record with a motion to accept unanimously.

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

Board member Larry turned the meeting over to Greg for the CEO report

### **CEO Report, Greg Shannon**

Greg reported that as a part of the Charter Renewal process one of the things that the Charter School Office looks for is how to communicate the mission, vision and core values to the Board of Directors. The recommendation is that they begin every Board meeting reviewing their mission, vision and core values. He shared with members that the mission, vision and core values and in all of the Board packets. As a matter of record a discussion will take place tonight and at every Board meeting going forward a review of the mission, vision and core values.

### **African American Charter School Coalition Report Findings**

Greg reported that they had findings with regard to the School District's Charter School Office regarding Charter Renewal. There are hearings that are currently going on to review the Charter Renewal process. There are also hearings with city council to review the report led by the chairman of the education committee of city council Isaiah Thomas. Greg said that he would keep the Board updated relative to those findings.

### **ICS Capital Improvement Plan Update**

Greg reported that the work will begin on December 18<sup>th</sup>. They will begin replacing the windows, siding and rooftop HVAC units.

### **Corrective Action Plan Update**

Greg reported that they have devised a corrective action plan for their 2021-2022 PSSA scores for their Special Ed children. They are working in conjunction with consultants from the PA Department of Education relative to the development and monitoring of the corrective action plan.

### **ACE Preview 2023**

Greg reported that they are in the preview cycle of their annual Charter School Evaluation Report. The evaluation includes three domains; Operations, Governance and Specialized Services. He said that they passed 24 of 25 evaluation pieces with an outstanding rating. They are looking forward to having a very strong annual Charter Evaluation for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, Greg shared that many of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Harambee were selected for some of the top high schools throughout the region. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked if they publicize on the Harambee website the number of students that have been successfully accepted into top High Schools. Greg responded that it is publicized on their class DOJO that goes out to all of their parents. He said that going forward they will be sure that it is publicized on their Harambee website. Board member Renee commented that it makes her very proud to see the statistics and very proud to see the success of Harambee.

Board member Larry asked if Harambee had any issues or saw anything that was biased as they were trying to get their Charter School renewal. Greg said that they work with the Charter School office in the spirit of partnership cooperation, so they have not seen some of the biases that other schools complain of. There has only been one instance that they felt might have been unfair.

### **Instruction, Nakia Brown**

Nakia reported that they had an opportunity to send their Math teachers to Pattan for Professional Development Opportunities with the developers of the PSSA. She also reported that their teachers in English Language Arts are doing a book study. She said that they made 2% growth in ELA but realized that there is room for growth so they decided to do a book study where they are concentrating on reading and writing across the content area. Nakia reported that in their Science class they are taking a concentrated look at their eligible content and their scope and sequence to ensure that students are being exposed to the information and having rich experiences around hands on Science and STEM. She said that they are excited to announce that this year they are planning a K- 5 science fair. It is their goal to get their middle school students into the Carver Science Fair this year.

### **Assessment**

Nakia reported that this month additional data was released via the Future Ready portal. She said that Greg asked her to do a comparison presentation and provide the Board with data from similar schools in size and demographics in West Philadelphia and across the city. She presented a report that provided the Spring 2023 PSSA Comparison and Growth in West Philadelphia and Similar Schools. She shared a power point presentation that was included in the Board packets. She pointed out which schools are out performing Harambee and what

they can do to improve. Nakia ended her presentation and opened the floor for questions. Board member Larry asked if Harambee compares itself to public schools. Nakia indicated that the schools in the report were both Public and Charter Schools. She said that she compared all similar schools in the area. Greg pointed out that Harambee has the highest PSSA scores in the West Philadelphia community including Public and Charter Schools. In similar school groups that include schools all over town they surpassed every school except Bridesburg with about 6% percentage points behind. All of their scores have exceeded growth and they expect to continue along that trajectory.

Board member Wade asked if the PSSA scores include all grades. Nakia responded that they include testing grades 3-8. Greg added grades 3-8 in ELA and Math and 4 and 8 in Science.

Board member Renee commented that she is glad to see that Harambee is returning to Science Fairs.

Dr. Baynard added that one of the things worth noting in their comparative data is that Bridesburg is a Public School not a Charter School. And, 20% of their population is poverty stricken whereas 100% of Harambee's population is in catchment's that fall below poverty, plus they have a student teacher ratio of 16/1 and Harambee's student teacher ratio is much greater.

Board member Jan commented on the commitment and how well Harambee has done. She thanked leadership and commended them on the extraordinary job that they have done. She also encouraged them to continue to be vigilant and to keep the team together as Greg mentioned that Charter Renewal is coming up soon. Greg turned the meeting to David for his report on Operations.

### **Operations, David Rosario**

#### **Parent Portal**

David reported that they have approximately 240 families in the parent portal at present. He said that they have cleaned through the data and increased it five fold. He said that the reason for the parent portal connection is that it has allowed them to do things like robo calling and special messaging. Some of the future applications of the parent portal will allow honor role and report cards and other applications that intend to build towards. David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Baynard asked if there has been any feedback from parents as to how easy or hard it is to use both the portal and DOJO. David responded that their official communication is through DOJO but they have been collecting data to build up the platform. He said that robo calling gives them an extra intervention of contact.

Dr. Baynard asked if they can do parent teacher conferences over zoom. David said that they have done them over zoom but that they are trying to make school, school again so they want the parents to come in to see what they are doing at Harambee. He said that they will do conferences as needed by zoom but the main goal is to be more community based.

Board member Larry asked if the parent portal is their main ability to reach out to parents or is there another system that needs to be loaded into the parent portal. David responded that it is not the only system that they have. He said that they have their Infinite Campus system and DOJO that communicates with parents. The parent portal is an additional intervention support service and they are over 50% into connectivity with this portal. They are building it as an additional intervention to keep their parents connected. They are working on various different barriers so that they have as many ways as possible to connect with parents.

Board member Wade advised that they are about to move into the construction phase of the project with ICS and asked if all of their stakeholders are fully aware of the impact. He asked if all staff, parents and neighbors have been notified. He said that a large crane will be coming to the site that may have a generator may be running on diesel for possibly 24 hours a day for a few days. He said that he is a big advocate of stakeholder involvement and making sure that folks are aware of what will be happening, the more information the better. Greg responded that during their staff professional development meeting it was discussed with staff and during their report card conferences over two days in November he held parent meetings informing them of the ICS project. He said that Danielle has also posted it on class DOJO and printed it on flyers to stuff in student book bags along with robo calls to parents. They will also hold a community stakeholders meeting next week to inform immediate neighbors that Harambee will be a hardhat construction site. Greg turned the floor to Deleah for her report on Specialized Services.

### **Specialized Services, Deleah Archer**

Deleah reported that she would have three things to report on this evening.

#### **12/1 Child Find Report**

Deleah reported that their annual Child Find report that is due on December 1<sup>st</sup> was sent to the district checker for revisions that were provided to her earlier this week. She said that all revisions were completed and the report is on time and correct. The report identifies all students that have IEP's in the building.

#### **Jr. Honor Society 23-24**

Deleah reported that they are working on the students GPA's and focusing on those students that will be eligible. She said that they will have the timeline for the induction ceremony soon and will report on it at the next Board meeting.

### **Compensatory Education Agreement for Student C. Barrett**

Deleah reported that she has a Board vote for a Compensatory Education Agreement included in the Board packets. She indicated that she would turn it over to the Board Chair Maurice Baynard for a vote from the Board. Dr. Baynard indicated that he would turn it back to Board member Larry who is officiating the meeting this evening. Board member Larry asked Deleah to give a brief synopsis of the agreement. Deleah told members that a student who is no longer with Harambee enrolled with them last year at the end September with an IEP. After due process a settlement was reached. The agreement is presented to the Board for a vote.

Board vote to approve compensatory education

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

### **Budget and Finance, Michelle Thornton**

Michelle reported that she only has one update for this evening. She reported that she was able to share a draft of the audit report with the finance committee on Monday (Please see attached).

She reported that there were a couple of changes that she had to make and submit to the auditors. She told members that they have returned an updated version of the report. She will be sharing that report with the Board within the next 24 hours with the hope that the Board will have an opportunity to review the report between now and the December meeting. She said that she hopes to have a vote at the December meeting in order to meet the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline to submit it to the Charter School office and to the state. So far, there are no findings in the report or any management comments. She indicated that once the Board has reviewed the report they would see at the presentation next month that Harambee's financial performance last year was very good. Michelle reported that she would have one additional correction that she would be sending out. In the financial report there was a page that dropped off with a list of disbursements that she would resend to everyone.

Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Board member Larry asked if there would be a presentation from the auditors this time. Michelle responded that we should always have presentation from the auditors and yes Robin would be at the December meeting virtually to do a presentation.

Board member Wade asked if we would be in person next month. Michelle said yes we are in person next month and they are currently working on those plans. They are working with technology to on plans to conduct the meeting virtually as well. Greg told members that we are scheduled for Wednesday December 13<sup>th</sup> at the Pyramid Club and they are currently working to secure the site. Greg turned

the meeting back to Board member Larry and he asked if there were any further items.

**Action Items:** Board vote to approve Compensatory Education Agreement for Student C. Barrett

Board member Wade made a motion to approve the Compensatory Education Agreement for Student C. B. as written, seconded by Board member Renee. All were in favor none were opposed. Passed Unanimously.

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

### **Old Business**

- In-Person December meeting (12/13/2023), Pyramid Club, Philadelphia

Board Chair Dr. Baynard indicated that there were two old business items on the agenda for this evening. He said that because of the upcoming holiday, the Board would meet on December 13<sup>th</sup> instead of the end of the month. He asked Greg to elaborate. Greg said that in order to give ample time for the Board meeting and for refreshments, the meeting should begin at 5 p.m. instead of 6:30.

He also mentioned to Board member Jan that ID badges for Board members are in and would be distributed at the meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>. He said that Board member Jan made the suggestion that Board members have ID badges because there are a number teacher stores that provide discounts for purchases if you are a member of an educational institution.

Board member Wade asked if there had been a post for the HBCU tour. Greg responded that they sent a videographer and photographer on the tour with the chaperones and they were able to capture videos and still photos. Both are currently being uploaded.

- January Board only Retreat Scheduling proposed, Saturday January 13th 2024

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Concerns**

None

### **Motion to Adjourn:**

Board member Wade made a motion to adjourn the public session; seconded by Board member Jan, all were in favor none were opposed.

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

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison

**Next Meeting:** The next Board meeting will be held on December 13<sup>th</sup> 2023