

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, October 25th 2023

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 25th 2023 via Zoom at 6:34 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order
at 6:34 p.m. by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Joseph Foster
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Renee Whitby
Charis Jackson
Donna Holmes Lockett

Board Members Absent:

Shawn Blue
Larry Bell
C. Wade Mosely

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.

Introduction of visitors and others

There were no visitors present at this meeting

Roll Call

Board 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 September 27th Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the September 27th Board minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Joe made a motion seconded by Board member Renee to accept the minutes as presented, all were in favor, none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented. Dr. Baynard turned the meeting over to Greg for the CEO report

Approval: 6 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

CEO Report, Greg Shannon Organizational Leadership

African American Charter School Coalition Report Findings

Greg told members that the Board packets contained a report commissioned by the African American Charter School Coalition relative to an investigation looking into allegations of racist and bias practices by the School District of Philadelphia's Charter School Office. He said that in the packets there is a link to the 190-page document and a white paper that summarizes the investigation. They did find that there is inherent bias in the Charter School authorization and evaluation process. Greg also reported that several teachers, parents, children and administrators went to Harrisburg and spoke directly with the legislators. He advised members to stay tuned for additional information because that process is ongoing. He reminded members that all of the information that he spoke of is included in the Board packets.

ICS Capital Improvement Plan Update

Greg reported that they are scheduled for the construction phase of their capital improvement campaign and have partnered with ICS. Greg gave kudos to Board member Wade for his leadership in design and construction. He said that the construction phase will begin on Monday December 18th and will work through the winter recess. He said that they are recommending that as the construction phase begins on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week that those days become Asynchronous instructional days and staff in the building will have 3 days of professional development. Following on Thursday December 21st and Friday December 22nd will again be Asynchronous instructional days for students and the staff will work virtually at home on both days. All staff and students will return to Harambee in person on January 2nd.

Corrective Action Plan Update

Greg reported that they are in corrective action because of their PSSA scores. He gave kudos to Nakia and Deleah who have worked diligently on their corrective action plan. He shared with members that PDE defines corrective action as a designation for LEA's whose performance on state assessments and data metrics have fallen below standards in Academic Achievement, Participation Rate and Student Attendance. Greg shared his screen with members and narrated through all of the slides. He spoke about WHY they are in corrective action and their plan to get out of corrective action. He reviewed the slides and showed that their main focus would be on Instruction and Student Attendance (see attached power point). Greg indicated that he has reviewed the plan along with his other administrators to ensure that the plan is comprehensive and follows the guidelines outlined by PDE.

HPA Title I Parent Meeting

Greg reported that they had their first HPA Title I Parent meeting of the school year a week ago and they had over 70 parents that participated. He said that they have identified a few parents that they would like to recommend to the Board to become Parent Liaisons on the Board. Both of the parents that they have identified are really engaged and involved. He said that they will continue to vet them and will bring them for introductions to the Board in the near future. Greg opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee noted that she was very pleased with the video and pictures of the parent meeting that Nakia sent to her. Dr. Baynard also commended both Greg and the team for a strong parent meeting. He asked if they really have a handle on why the Special Ed students missed so many days. Greg responded that there was a family of 2 students that had 90 days of absences, which skewed their data down significantly. He said that he and David would be keeping a close watch on the student attendance data and using intervention strategies ongoing. Greg concluded his report and turned the meeting to Nakia for her presentation on the 2023-2024 PSSA data.

Curriculum & Instruction, Nakia Brown

Nakia indicated that she would guide members through the official results of the spring 2023 summative assessment PSSA.

She reviewed the data and provided an explanation on all of the key data points, which included the percentage of student's proficient and advanced in English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. The presentation also included Points of Pride in all three-subject categories. She informed members that they would use this data to make instructional decisions to continue growth and to increase student achievement. The power point was included in the Board packages for further review by members. Nakia concluded her opened the floor for questions. She informed members that Greg would discuss the PASA scores. Dr. Baynard

asked if the numbers that were presented were percentages or absolute numbers of students. Nakia said that those are percentages. Dr. Baynard said that there is real cause for hope and that the processes that have been put in place are showing some real progress. He asked that he and Nakia set up a meeting to take a deeper dive into real areas for focusing on improvement. Dr. Baynard added that in all of the years that he has been on the Board at Harambee this is the single best presentation of PSSA data that he has ever seen and they should be absolutely thrilled that what they are doing at Harambee is working. Nakia concluded and turned the meeting over to Greg.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Greg indicated that he would share PASA data with members. Deleah is joining the meeting from the Get on the bus tour. He said that their BSE audit and training have been completed and that they are currently on the Get On The Bus tour. He gave kudos to Deleah and Goldie for an amazing presentation at the K-12 School Fair. He said that it entices young people to go through the lottery process. He also said that they had an amazing 8th grade parent meeting regarding their High School application process, dues and activities.

PASA

Greg reported that PASA is the PA Alternative State Assessment for students with complex needs and disability types. He shared a power point with members and pointed out Harambee student performance in 3rd and 4th grade. The power point was also shared as an attachment in the Board packets. He said that their students that have a unique learning type did very well last year on the PASA assessment.

Dr. Baynard asked how many students took the PASA exam. Deleah responded that 4 students took the PASA exam last year and there will be 5 students taking the PASA exam this year. She said that they have a total of 10 students in the entire population, but only 5 students are in testing grades.

Deleah and Greg concluded the report for Specialized Services and Greg asked Deleah to give a brief update on the Get On the Bus tour. Deleah said that they are having a great time; they were currently having dinner at Golden Corral. She said that they have participated in lots of activities including bowling. She shared that the trip has really broadened their ideas of what could be possible for them in the future. She said that students got to meet the President of Florida A&M University today. Yesterday the boys went to Morehouse and the girls went to Spellman. Since both colleges were having their homecoming the students got to participate in many of the activities. Greg concluded and turned the floor to Michelle for her report on Business, Finance & HR

Business, Finance & HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that she would only have 2-3 brief updates. The first is that they have been filling vacancies and their final position has been filled for the

Special Education teacher position. They are filling the position with a candidate from Math Civics and Science. Michelle said that she will be joining them on Friday at their professional development training. Once she is on board their final vacancy will be filled.

Michelle said that they are currently in their audit process and they submitted all of their audit documentation and are currently in the process of selection and testing. She asked that the Board continue to keep the Board Minutes approved, as they will have to be submitted over the next few months. She said that they are expected to have a draft of the audit report by November 6th.

Michelle indicated that she would give members an update on the Finance committee meeting that was held last Monday. She said that PNC gave a presentation last week at the meeting regarding the bond rating process. She said that they would like to move forward with it and there are a couple of options for them.

- If they use Moody's it could possibly be free
- If they use Standard & Poor's (S&P) it could cost a fee of up to 5,000.

They also want to continue looking for investment firms and /or banks that would give them a better interest rate and lower cost in the process of refunding. They will continue working with the Finance Committee and other agencies that will work with them to provide the best rate. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard asked when would they be ready to engage in the bond rating process. Michelle said that they missed the a window of opportunity last year when the rates were lower, however the rates will still be lower than the current rate that they have now. She said that they are hopeful that interest rates will drop over the next 6 months, so they want to get in gear in case that happens, particularly with the bond rating process. She said that based on the information that they have already submitted and based upon what is currently out for public record and their present financial position, they should fair well. She said that they also want to consider any other capital improvement projects that they might want to fund during the process. Michelle concluded her report and turned the meeting back to Greg and Dr. Baynard. Greg said that this would conclude all reports for the evening and that there are a couple of additional Board items to address. He said that one would be a vote on the minutes and the other would be the Board's approval of their Corrective Action Plan. Dr. Baynard advised that the September minutes had already been approved earlier in the meeting and since there were no additions or corrections they can submit those in the next day or so.

Old Business

None

New Business

Dr. Baynard informed members that there are three items that he wanted to make Board members aware of with the understanding that they are missing a few Board members this evening. He said that the first is based upon a special upload that has to be sent to PDE.

Special vote for October Board Minutes (for upload to PDE)

Dr. Baynard advised members that due to a special upload that has to be submitted to PDE, they would need to approve this evenings (Octobers) meeting minutes by an electronic vote by the middle of this month. He said that he would work with Jenita (Board Liaison) to finish the minutes early and get a draft of them out. He advised that the Board would have to vote on the minutes in a more expedient way than normal and then submit that electronic vote as a final vote at the next Board meeting.

Board Retreat Scheduling

Dr. Baynard indicated that members have talked a number of times about a Board retreat. He said that he would send around a poll regarding members availability and then utilize that to think about ways that they can get together. He suggested maybe on a Saturday morning or a Friday afternoon just to cover Board business that they cannot cover in their public meetings.

In-Person December meeting

Dr. Baynard said that they have been talking about a public meeting since April of 2020. He said their intention is to hold an in person meeting in December and since the Board room is now being utilize for other things they will meet downtown at the Pyramid Club hosted by the CEO Greg Shannon. He said that they would set up a way in which the public can join via zoom.

- **Action Items**

- Approval of September Board Meeting Minutes

Approval: 6 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

- Approval of Corrective Action Plan

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for a vote on the Corrective Action Plan. Board member Joe made a motion to accept the Corrective Action Plan as it has been presented, seconded by Board members Renee and Charis. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was unanimously passed.

Dr. Baynard asked if any of the Board members had any outstanding issues that they would like to bring forth. Board member Charis asked if the Board needed to vote on asynchronous days. Greg said no it was just an update.

Public Concerns

None

Motion to Adjourn:

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 29, 2023