

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 27th 2023

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, September 27th 2023 via Zoom at 6:31 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Board Chairman Maurice Baynard

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

Donna Holmes Lockett

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 August 30th Board Meeting Minutes (Approval of minutes)

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the August 30th Board minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Larry made a motion seconded by Board member Wade 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: 8 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

CEO Report, Greg Shannon Organizational Leadership

Back to School Night 2023-2024

Greg asked Danielle to share the screen with members and gave kudos to the team for great planning and told members that they hosted the Back to school night like a carnival with music and activities in the schoolyard. He said that for the first time since 2019 they brought parents in to the building and allowed them to travel through building and meet with teachers. He remarked that Deleah and the counselors did a great job with the 8th grade students and parents in the selection process. He said that they also had a meeting around student attendance and truancy. He said that they had an overwhelming turnout and there were over 300 families represented at back to school night.

School Opening

Greg reported that they are past the 10-day window of leveling and after the 10th day of enrolling on day 11 they are compelled by the PA school code to drop any student that has not attended within that 10-day window. Greg reported that this week they had some unevenness in the 6th grade classrooms and they leveled off to approximately 27-28 students in each class. He said that they are now leveled off in all of their classes and their enrollment to date is 570 students in grades K-8.

HASA update

Greg reported that it is their intent to open the HASA program on Monday October 2nd. He gave many thanks to Board member Joe and the Omega Psi Phi organization and the Beta Gama Alumni who have sponsored 4 college scholarships to 4 very deserving young men. He said that they hosted a luncheon at Harambee and shared a beautiful fellowship with those young men

and their families along with the members of the chapter. Through Vanguard investments, the Beta Gama Alumni will donate and contribute to the college scholarships. Greg said that they have pictures and will feature it on social media and their website. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions and comments

Curriculum & Instruction, Nakia Brown

Nakia reported that it has been a very busy month for their department.

Curriculum

Nakia reported that they have updated their science curriculum in grades K-5 and the teachers are now using TCI, which is a digital science platform that allows access to science based lessons and experiments all following the PA common core standards.

Instruction

Nakia reported that they have been committed to their quick visit observations and all 21 classes have been observed with a quick visit. The visits follow the Charlotte Danielson's classroom environment checklist under domain two which looks at things like instructional foundation and African centered culture. It incorporates things like evidence of respect for elders. For example, when teachers come into the classroom there are physical displays of all of the rules and the classroom has a neat, warm and confident environment.

Nakia said that currently they have about 96% of their classrooms on tasks, on time and on task during the time of their observations. Quick visit observations have been completed at 100%.

Instructional coaching

Nakia reported that their instructional coaching program is well under way and currently every one has an instructional coaching profile. This identifies their formative and local data, teacher strengths and areas of growth along with consensual goals that the coach and teacher agree upon together. The first coaching cycle begins on October 2nd and runs through October 31st. She said that they have instructional foci around reading and writing across the curriculum and content areas and have a very high level of reading and writing across their curriculum.

Baseline Assessments

Nakia reported that they have completed their base line assessments and the window was September 12th through September 22nd. Currently 100% of their students have completed assessments in both reading and math and they did a baseline assessment in writing. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee asked if she could have a copy of some of the books that the children are reading. Nakia replied yes, that she would share the book list

with her. Board member Wade asked if they have received any information on the assessments. Nakia said that the files have not been released yet and all schools are still waiting. Greg said that it is their intent to do a presentation as soon as the information is received. He said that right after they get the data the very next board meeting they would do a presentation to the board.

Board member Charis asked if they have content specific PD's or is it always the same. Nakia said that they have differentiated and content specific PD's. She said that their upcoming PD on Friday will be differentiated. Charis also asked if they have other content specialist to come in to offer those PD's or is it just from the coaches. Nakia said that they have other people to come in and in August they had a reading specialist Katina Maggie who came in and did some professional development around reading and writing across the curriculum as well as brain study and instructional pedagogy.

Board member Jan asked if there are plans for the brain based learning to continue throughout the year or was it just the one shot in the summer. Nakia said no, that the plan is to work with Katina and some others. They plan to keep her under contract to continue so she'll be back in October. Nakia concluded her report and Greg turned the meeting to David for his report on operations.

Operations, David Rosario

Summer Refresh Projects

David said that the summer refresh projects that they did this year were very comprehensive around the school but they have more uniqueness this summer. One of the projects, thanks to doctor Archer and her network they were given a washer and dryer and they created a laundry room in support of the students. In addition, they were able to mount seven new smart TV's for assistive technology in their classrooms. He said that they also updated their memorandum of understanding as they do annually with the 19th school district. He said there were various amounts of refreshing with their painting and electrical. He mentioned again that they installed 8 new bathroom stalls, which were successfully installed on budget and on time.

ICS Capital Projects Updates

David reported that they are meeting with them and are now moving into a bi-weekly meeting schedule. They are talking about clearances for contractors as they are getting those folks in order with verifications and permits. They are identifying space for work trailers and equipment and talking about weather contingencies along with identifying a project manager and superintendent. They are looking through their job experience to make sure that they get the most value and the most comprehensive work that we can get for Harambee.

Chrome book Distribution

David reported that they collected all student and staff chrome books and they were all cleaned refurbished and password protected.

Truancy Elimination Plan

David reported that they have employed all sections of the school like an all hands on deck comprehensive approach. That means that when they are at one or two absences they are looking for classroom teachers, Para professionals, our special education teachers and case managers to pull up their sleeves and do their part by reaching out to parents. He said that the CRT team is reaching out for tardiness and they are looking for trends in early students that were picked up for early dismissals and they are looking for any trends that they can find and really cultivating the tardy data. David said that they are treating 3 tardies as an absence and when they get to three absences their main office will send out the C 31 letters to notify students and parents that they are approaching an area of needing an improvement plan. David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Baynard asked if the truancy problem is school wide or is it amongst a known small minority in which case it's really an interpersonal problem of those families; and have we figured out what the problem is with those families or at least had a conversation with them. David responded that what they did was to host a back to school night to address that directly. He said that he and Greg did a 1:1 and corralled those specific families. He said that they met with no less than 15 to 20 families and were very specific about what they are doing this year and what they are not doing as opposed to years past.

Dr. Baynard asked if the meetings have had an impact. David said that they have seen an impact for example; at some point in sampling their tardy tracking it was 10 students per page and were double-digit pages at some point. They are now at 5 and 4 pages now so they are really impacted and drilling down every day with their messaging. Board member Wade asked David to explain the MOU with the 19th district. David said that they have an understanding with the police that they will use every methodology to not damage a young person's future. When school concerns come in and if police get involved they really have a relational effect on how they go after that situation. Greg turned the meeting to Deleah for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Deleah reported that she would have a short but sweet list

BSE Audit Training Completed

Deleah indicated that last January 2023 they completed their special education six year cyclical monitoring and part of their findings were that they wanted them to provide a certain number of trainings. She said that they have done that for the staff over the summer and they also have a calendar of trainings for teachers that will be infused. She said that she has also submitted their training schedule to the state to close out that item for that ding that they received on their audit. She said that she is happy to present that we were able to successfully finish.

Get On The Bus Tour 2023 goes south

Deleah reported that the Get On The Bus Tour is less than thirty days away. The tour will begin on October 23rd and will continue until October 29th which is a Sunday so Monday through Sunday. They will go to Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Then they will visit Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Florida A&M, Tuskegee and Alabama State University. While they are there they will also look at Tuskegee museum and will also have some opportunities to do activities on the campuses. They will attend the homecoming on Saturday for Morehouse and then return home on Sunday.

K-12 School Fair: October 13-14

Deleah reported that are getting their 8th graders ready to transition to high school. They will be participating in the K-12 school fair where a host of over 100 schools will be at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on Friday October 13th and on Saturday October 14th.

This is an opportunity for Harambee to showcase all the great things that we provide and also share information about their application process and to start that process with families coming to learn more about Harambee. They will have a nicely decorated table at this free event that is open for all individuals. It will be highly publicized so they will have current staff members manning the table as well as current students and some alumni will be coming to speak about how great their experiences were at Harambee and how it is the best place to be educated.

National Jr. Honor Society 2023-2024

Deleah reported that the National Honor Society will begin after their first marking period, where they will take a look at students GPA's and our dedicated counselors will head off this initiative for the National Junior Honor Society. Deleah concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Board member Larry asked if Deleah could provide an update on the financial impact of the Get On The Bus Tour. She replied that Michelle would provide all financial information.

Dr. Baynard asked how many students are involved in the gifted and talented program and what kinds of things are they doing. Deleah responded that yes they still do have their gifted program. She said that they instituted a new course called challenge, which replaces one of their electives, and it happens twice a week right now. They have a 5th grader and 8th grader because they lost some students that transitioned out because they graduated and/or they left the school. They will continue to test students to see who qualifies and to capture more students. Greg turned the meeting to Michelle for her report on business and finance.

Budget, Finance & HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle indicated that she would just have two quick comments and asked members to see the attached Financial/HR updates. She said that she and Greg

did not have an opportunity to update Dr. Archer on their Finance Committee meeting but they will do so in their leadership meeting tomorrow. She said that Deleah has put together some very nice visual material on her project including a nice looking budget so they will be sure that that the Board gets a copy. She said that from her last look they were very close to a \$45,000 budget for the project.

Vacancies

Michelle indicated that they are still working on filling their vacancies. They were able to fill one of the general education Para positions and they are still in search of three other candidates. She said that if anyone knows of special education teachers please send them their way. They are vetting and interviewing on a daily basis.

Audit

Michelle reported that she wanted to give an update on where they are with the audit. She said if you recall from last year's presentation they talked about getting some additional support around their PSERS adjustment and that calculation. They wanted to take that out of the hands of their auditors doing it and bring it internally so they have engaged with a part time controller to help them with it, which is moving along very well. She said that they are a little behind and since July they have been short of an administrative assistant and they did hire someone that they have been vetting over the past 30 days and her first day is next week. She said that they are a couple of weeks behind but they will meet their deadline by December 31st. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked if she wanted to revisit the bond council discussion towards refinancing. Michelle said that she actually has it on her calendar with the representative from PNC for next week to get moving with the bond rating. She said that Board member Joe mentioned reaching out to Rodney Jones. Board member Wade told Michelle and members that he would like to talk about it off line, but he just wanted to bring it to her attention.

Dr. Baynard told members that he does think that it is important as a Board item to have an open discussion about timelines, rate, bond ratings, what their expectations are and refinance and so they will add it to the next meeting as an agenda item. He said that the conversation should be led by the Finance Committee to have an open and thoughtful conversation about what their options are. Michelle turned the meeting back to Greg and he said that this would conclude all reports for this evening. Dr. Baynard indicated that there were no visitors this evening and asked Board members if there was anything that a member would like to bring to the table.

Public Concerns

None

Old Business

Board member Wade indicated that he did have an old Board item. He asked if there has been any further discussion about the space that they were looking at 66th & Haverford. Greg responded that the owner of that parcel is more interested in developing the parcel for retail and the desire for retail in that space was being strongly pushed by city council. Dr. Baynard commented that when they first started having those discussions, Greg was really passionate that they had just run out of space. He said that he wonders post pandemic where things are going and if it is still a focus, and if so, do they need to get a renewed focus on what the available spaces are. Greg responded that it is still the case and they have utilized every space possible to create storage and they are still in need of additional space. He said that he and Michelle have had some very preliminary conversations about the CVS that exists on the corner of 66th and Haverford, which is about 12,000 to 15,000 square feet. He said that they could certainly benefit from acquiring that parcel of land and developing it. If they continue to have a strong desire from the community to attend Harambee they will continue to pursue space.

Dr. Baynard said that they would get together a group of people to discuss how it will be done, as there is an absolute need for it to be done.

New Business

None

Action Items

None

Motion: Dr. Baynard opened the floor for a motion to adjourn the public session; Board member Joseph made the motion seconded by Board member Wade and all were in favor none were opposed.

Approval: 8 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

Next Public Meeting: The next Public Board Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 25th 2023.