

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday March 27th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, March 27th 2024 at 6:33 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board member Wade Mosely called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Board Members Present:

C. Wade Mosely
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Renee Whitby
Shawn Blue
Larry Bell

Board Members Absent:

Maurice Baynard
Charis Jackson
Donna Holmes Lockett

Others Present:

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

There were no visitors present at this meeting

Roll Call

Board member Wade Mosely 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 and approval of the February 28th Board Meeting Minutes

Board member Wade asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the February 28th Board meeting minutes. There were no additions or corrections. All five Board members in attendance were in favor, none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Approval: 5 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

Board member Wade turned the meeting over to Greg for the CEO report.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Greg began with reciting the Mission, Vision and Core Values of the organization.

Harambee Institute exists to offer our community an education with a focus on the origins, current status, and future of the African world.

Our mission is to educate students to succeed as global citizens with a clear awareness of “who I am, where I am from, where I am going, and how I get there.”

Our vision is a collective and informed African American community utilizing science and technology as a means of promoting education for self-reliance, locally and globally.

Our core values are:

Greatness: Pursuit of excellence in all we do

Accountability: Owning what we do and who we are

Innovation: Open to new ideas with a growth mindset

Integrity: Honesty, transparency, and unity in all we do.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

School District of Philadelphia’s Charter Office Visit

Greg reported that the Charter Schools Office deputy visited Harambee in March along with two members of his team. He said that the visit went very well with a great information session with all of their executive leaders. He said that it was followed by a visit into the classrooms so that they could take a first hand look at their strong instructional programs. The team expressed gratitude for the invitation to Harambee and said that based on the data and the visit all of their indicators were pointed upward.

School District of Philadelphia's Charter Renewal Status

Greg told members that beginning in July they will be in year 4 of 5 of their Charter term. He said that he has asked Danielle and David to look at the tenants of their performance data in all of the domains and to coordinate each executive leaders look into the data of their respective departments. Beginning in July he will partner with someone who has expertise in the renewal process and will help lead the organization through the Charter Renewal process. He said that they have reviewed their Charter Renewal conditions and they have a number of conditions from the last renewal that they were directed to meet. He said that many of those conditions have already been satisfied, but still some remain open and need to be addressed by the administration and the Board.

Tribute to Joe Foster

Greg told members that Harambee wants to pay tribute to Joe Foster and said that their Art teacher is a commissioned artist. Harambee has commissioned him to do murals throughout the building and they have also commissioned him to paint a mural as a tribute in honor of Joe Foster. He said that everyone will begin to see that work of art in the next 30-60 days. In addition to that they will dedicate the courtyard in honor of Joe Foster and it will become the Joe Foster Courtyard. It will be decorated with benches and flowers and will have a banner with his image that hangs from the roof to ground level. Once all is set, they will contact his wife and key members of his family to attend a dedication program and ceremony in his honor. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Jan asked what is needed from the Board to help satisfy the Charter Renewal conditions. Greg responded that conditions range in two domains. There are conditions for the Board as well as conditions for the administration. He said that the Board has standard conditions like complying with the Sunshine Act, holding Board meetings regularly, providing Statements of Financial Interest, developing policies around the Ethics Act in Pennsylvania and ensuring term limits around the number of years that they can serve as Board members.

He advised that there are also certain administrative conditions that speak to academic responsibilities such as ensuring that they are within ten percentage points of the School Districts average in the 2022-2023 school year for the PSSA in Math, ELA and Science for schools of their type. He told members that he would provide a copy of the conditions for their review. In order for Harambee to have their Charter renewed they will have to satisfy all of those conditions.

Board member Wade asked if the person that they are planning to hire to help lead the organization through the renewal process would be preparing a checklist so that they can assure that they are meeting all of the targets. Greg said yes, that the School District has a calendar of collections that is a schedule of documents that rolls up to the Charter Renewal. It is the system that they use to

track their data, performance and conditions. He said that the person that they will be looking for will not only have expertise, but will have a success record in preparing organizations for renewal.

Board member Wade asked if the visit that they had from the Charter Schools Office was an informal visit. Greg responded that the visit was not evaluative in any manner. He said that they have worked very hard to develop a partnership with the Charter Schools Office to work in concert with them in sharing information and ideas. He said that they have been extremely supportive of Harambee and have provided advice when needed and answered any questions that they have posed about a particular domain or metric.

Board member Dr. Blue asked how long are the term limits for Board members. Greg responded that he would have to review the By-laws to be certain and to be sure that members do not exceed the stipulated term.

Instruction, Nakia Brown **Curriculum**

Inventory Consumable Materials

Nakia reported that this month they are in the process of doing inventory on their consumable books in preparation for reordering next year's books. She said that one of the things that they do is to survey teachers on best practice for curriculum. They look at what is working and how they feel about various curriculums, so that they can collect the data and create a plan for curriculum choices, options and supplemental resources.

Instruction

Nakia reported that they are preparing for the PSSA and as they prepare they pay close attention to both formative and summative data. She said that they review the data and from that they create action plans to determine what they can do to improve student achievement. She said that they also use small group instruction as an approach to support student achievement and to make the adequate amount of growth.

Nakia told members that they are preparing for formal observations, which will begin on April 2nd. She said that the first window is April 2nd through April 19th.

Assessment

Nakia reported that they are planning for the PSSA and received their first box of materials on March 26th. They are expecting the test to arrive before April 8th. The window for those materials is April 2nd through April 8th and they are currently preparing their secure spaces for the test.

Benchmark III- Data Report

Nakia reported that they sat for the 3rd iteration of their benchmark assessment. She said that they compare benchmark II data to their benchmark III data. There are three benchmarks in all beginning with the baseline that they take in early September to see where the students are. The next one is followed by the baseline and taken in December. She shared her screen for members to see the data. She reviewed and compared the school wide benchmark results by content area in grades 3-8. Nakia also shared data highlights from their benchmark III data. Nakia concluded her presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade commented that the results were outstanding and that the numbers really look great. He congratulated Nakia, the staff and everyone involved. He said that it is commendable that they have achieved those levels.

Board member Jan asked if they send packets home with the students so that the parents can help. Nakia said yes they do send packets home and they also send data reports home with the students that are parent friendly so that the parents are engaged in the data conversation as well. Greg turned the meeting over to David for his report on Operations.

Operations, David Rosario

Attendance Update

David reported that they are usually measured by their performance vs. a similar Charter School or District School. He said that based upon the metric that they are being measured by; they are exceeding the metric in both categories. He said in the 2023-2024 school year they are moving in the right direction. He said that they are continuing with their Truancy Prevention Program and it is in full force throughout the course of the year.

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

David reported that in January they had an audit for their Food Services Program and one of the results of a good audit is the opportunity for the Fruits and Vegetables Program. The program takes place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each week. He said that they want to expose students to fruits and vegetables that they may be unfamiliar with. They will continue this program until the funds are exhausted. David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions. Greg turned the meeting to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

BSE Audit–Passed (March 2024)

Dr. Archer reported that the Bureau of Special Education is required to conduct cyclical monitoring and they came out last year to conduct an audit of the Special Education Department. They did have findings and gave the organization one year to complete those findings. They returned in February and determined that

all items were completed as required and the Special Education Department meets all of the regulations according to the state of Pennsylvania.

ESY 2024

Dr. Archer reported that the Extended School Year Program will take place this year and it will be a half-day model from 9am to 12pm. It will run for 4 weeks Monday through Thursday. It is provided to students that show regression or loss of info over an extended period of time like winter break. It is also for students that have significant they have several students that meet that qualification and have IEP's. She said disabilities and will require additional support over the summer. She added that that the Extended School Year Program will follow the same dates as their Summer HASA program from the end of June through mid July.

Jr. National Honor Society Induction March 2024

Dr. Archer reported that they had a great turn out and inducted eleven students into the society. She said that the counselors that were advisors for the program did a wonderful job along with Shakira who helped with the decorating and coordinating the food. Families were in attendance to see the students sign the registry and receive their medals to be inducted into the Jr. National Honor Society.

Career Pathways Program June 2024

Dr. Archer reported that the Annual Career Pathways event will take place in June. She said that when they return for next months Board meeting, she will have more information that will that will be sent to each Board member asking if they would like to participate in the half day event. She told members that this is a program for all of their students and that they expose all of their students to different careers in grades K-8. The title is " IF YOU CAN SEE IT YOU CAN BE IT". The students and staff really enjoy the event and Deleah is proud to continue the tradition and host their third annual Career Pathways Program. Deleah concluded her report and turned the meeting back to Greg.

Greg commented that he did not want anyone to loose sight of the students that were just inducted into the Jr. National Honor Society. He said that these are 6th, 7th and 8th grade students that are a representation of the best and the brightest in the organization. All of them have a 3.7 grade point average or above. They are all reading on or above grade level. They are scoring proficient and/or advanced in Math and Language Arts. He said of equal importance they are all great humans beings with great moral compasses and great pillars of the student community.

Board member Wade asked what the process is to be inducted into the Jr. National Honor Society.

Dr. Archer responded that there is an application process and prior to that the counselors review and identify the students grades to determine if the students meet the GPA eligibility. In addition, there was also an essay and a community service-hour component along with recommendations from teachers and an application fee. Once the students turned in their full packets the advisory committee reviewed each packet and then the students had to receive the majority of votes to move forward.

Board member Wade also asked if they are capturing this on the Harambee website. Greg responded yes, that they had a photographer capturing the full event and it will be uploaded to their website as well as their social media platform.

Board member Wade asked if the Extended School Year Program is just for students with IEP's or other students that are slightly less than proficient. Dr. Archer responded that the Extended School Year Program is only for students with IEP's under the Federal Special Education Law.

Board member Wade asked Dr. Archer to keep him informed about the Career Day event as he may be interested in participating. She said that she would have a full presentation in next months meeting. Dr. Archer concluded her report and turned the meeting to Michelle for her report from the Finance department.

Business/Finance, Michelle Thornton

Statement of Financial Interest/Finalizing 2024-2025 Budget

Michelle reported that she would be presenting the 990 tax return this evening.

She thanked the Board and leaders for being responsive to the request for the Statement of Financial Interest. She indicated that they were able to get them in and submitted on time to the Charter School Office. She also told members that that they are finalizing their 2024-2025 budget. They have met with executive leaders and will present it to the Finance committee at the next committee meeting with hopes of presenting it to the Board so that they can have a vote in May.

Michelle shared her screen to review the 990 tax return and walked members through the form. She pointed out that the tax return is on extension, which is due in May. She said that they typically place it on extension so that the return represents the information that has been reported in the audit report. She explained to members that the document is open for public inspection and they are required to have it available upon request. Michelle reviewed the final pages of the form and told members that she will take a final review of the document and get a copy from the auditors to share so that members will have the opportunity to review it for themselves. She said that she is hoping for a vote to approve it at the next meeting. Michelle concluded her review and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade commented that \$30,000 dollars in parent fees seems to be a large number and asked why parent fees are so large. Michelle said that typically parents pay for trips, 8th grade dues and various other things that add up to the \$30,000 dollars that is reflected on the 990.

Action Items:

Old Business:

None

New Business:

None

Public Concerns:

There were no public concerns

Motion to Adjourn: Board member Larry made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Board member Renee. All were in favor and none were opposed.

Approval: AYE: 5 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent:

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 24th, 2024

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison