

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 31, 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, January 31st, 2024 at 6:32 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Larry Bell
Jan Gillespie- Walton (by zoom)
Donna Holmes Lockett
Renee Whitby
C. Wade Mosely
Charis Jackson

Board Members Absent:

Joseph Foster
Shawn Blue

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
Terrance	Facilities Manager
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 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 and approval of the November and December 2023 Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the November and December 2023 Board Meeting Minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Wade 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: 7 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

The Board Chairman turned the meeting over to the CEO. Greg recited 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

Greg asked Danielle to share the agenda. He said that they are in the most exciting and critical part of the entire school year.

School District of Philadelphia's Charter School Office Visit

Greg reported that they are scheduled for a visit from the School District of Philadelphia's Charter School Office. He said that they have received great feedback from the office and in fact were asked to share a copy of their Bullying and Code of Conduct policies as part of PLC training. They are scheduled to visit Harambee on February 15th at 9:00 A.M. He said that they are proud to show case their programs and students during the visit. He invited all of the Board members to visit the school at any time

Student Enrollment Lottery

Greg reported that their student enrollment is complete. He gave Kudos to David and Shakira who have led those efforts. He said that they held the lottery one week ago and they are enrolling 128 new students for the 2024-2025 school year. They will be hosting a series of new student, new family events in order to keep them engaged. Next week they will host a meet and greet for students and families. The senior leaders will present the schools programs and practices.

Budget, Allocation, and Staffing 2024-2025

Greg reported that in the next week he and Michelle will be meeting with senior leaders to review the new fiscal year budget by department. He said that they have an eye on developing what the next school year might look like. In addition, they will discuss their leadership retreat for the summer of 2024.

Property Acquisition

Greg reported that they still have a desire to seek out additional property. They had an opportunity to visit a property at 75th and Island Avenue near the airport. The property is an old factory warehouse that sits on about 40,000 square feet on a parcel of 5.6 acres of land. It comes with a greenhouse that would facilitate their urban garden program all year. It also has 40-foot ceilings that would accommodate a gym. He said that they have discussed the property with some of the Board members and he and Michelle will be developing a financial plan for purchase of additional property. Greg said that in order to continue facilitating all of the programs that they currently run and for the vision that they have for future programs they will be in need of additional space.

Greg also told members that as part of their strategic plan, they wanted to turn Harambee into a true community school, a place where parents and families can come to receive services. He said that they were able to write a grant and receive grant dollars for social and emotional learning. They have partnered with a company named Collective Client that will be providing the services. They have two therapeutic partners Dr. Iman a male and Dr. Kay a female that will come to Harambee five days per week 5-7:30n p.m. to provide therapeutic services for the students and families. This will take place January through May 2024. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee commented that she loves the idea of the meet and greet with new parents.

Board member Wade asked if there is an agenda when the Charter School Office comes out for the visit. Greg responded that the first visit felt like it was evaluative while this visit is for the Charter School Office to see in person if what they see in the data is true. Board member Wade also asked about the demographic of the 128 students enrolled. Greg said that the largest class of students coming in is always in the kindergarten and earlier grades.

Dr. Baynard suggested that the new therapeutic approach that is being offered to students and families should be reflected on Harambee's website. He said that it is a value add to the organization. In addition, he mentioned that they all should work together to have a Property Acquisition Plan in place that can be applied to any property and is always ready to execute.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

Nakia told members that this is a very crucial time of the year and they are engaged in many activities to move towards the PSSA.

Instruction

Math-IREADY Super bowl Challenge

Nakia said that the Math- IREADY Super bowl Challenge is a fun way to get students engaged on their independent IREADY assessments and lessons. It gives the students an individual learning plan based on how they score on the diagnostic assessment. She said that the Super bowl challenge incentivizes the students to use IREADY at home. At the end of the challenge students have an opportunity to win gift cards and dance parties. Nakia explained that another thing that they are doing in the area of instruction is increasing their writing across the curriculum. They are also increasing the use of non-fiction text and reading since they know that it is a large portion of the PSSA. They have also increased independent practice time and Small Group Instruction.

Scholastic Book Fair- January 29th-February 2

Nakia reported that they are currently holding their book fair. She told members that in 3 days students have already purchased \$6,000 worth of books. They are now gearing up for their Student Success Plan meetings. After the second marking period, David provides Nakia with the D and F report and any student that has a D or F in any class are asked to meet along with their parents to devise a success plan which consist of three components. It says what the school will do, what the student will do and what the parent will do. They have checkpoints to monitor the success and offer the success plan meetings via zoom for the convenience of the parents.

Literacy Mentor Service Project

Nakia reported that the project is happening through five schools across the city with 8th grade students. The student's travel outside of the school to get literacy training from certified teachers and literacy professionals. They receive the

training three times per year, once in February, March and April. They learn strategies that they can bring back to the students at Harambee in grades K-2 and up to increase their reading and comprehension skills.

Assessment Benchmark II

Nakia reported that they completed Benchmark II and met their internal goals in both ELA and Mathematics. They took benchmark II December 4-8. She reported that they are scheduled for Benchmark III in the week of March 11th.

PSSA Training

Nakia reported that they are preparing for PSSA training and the first training for teachers will be in February. Teachers will sit for the PSAT Assessment, which is required for all teachers to be testing proctors and test administrators. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade commended Nakia on an outstanding accomplishment with the book fair.

Dr. Baynard asked how long have they had the D&F plan in place as an intervention strategy and what percentage of students by the end of the year are passing. Nakia responded that this would be their third year and about 65-70% are passing.

Operations, David Rosario Facilities

David introduced Terrance, Facilities Manager and asked him to provide an overview of their ICS Capital Projects. He said that they meet daily with the construction manager on site. They meet as needed with the project manager and as needed with the change order team. They are nearing the end with RCU project with final adjustments and installation still ongoing. The last report indicated 95% complete with a few pending tasks of installation. Still waiting for a few items that are on back order and on hold to come in. They are 90% complete with demolition and construction. He said that they are scheduled for an engineers review and is currently punch listing items. He said that the majority of the work is 90% complete and they expect to be on target for siding installation by mid February. The change event orders that are pending are mostly concerning the rot areas.

Dr. Baynard asked if all of the improvements will increase the value of the building and how much more life are they buying with the improvements to the building. Board member Wade said that they could pose that question to ICS. However, all of the rooftop units (HVAC systems) are new and under warranty so that will add some benefit, but not sure how much it will add to the property value. It is a selling point to indicate that there are all new HVAC systems, something that a buyer would not have to worry about but not sure how it would

equate in adding property value. Terrance added that there is added value in sustainability. David added that they have advocated well for the students.

Food Services

David reported that they have a grant that allows their students to be exposed to fresh fruit and vegetables. He said that some of the tenants include deliveries on Monday of already packaged items of fresh fruit and vegetables and they must be items that differ from their current offerings. They hope that the program runs through April and as long as the grant lasts. He said lastly that this is great exposure for the students.

Current Attendance Stats/ACE Report Standards

David reported that they have begun a truancy illumination program to increase attendance. He shared his screen with members and explained in the slides how they are measured against similar schools and showed areas where they are outperforming district schools as well as similar schools. He reviewed average daily census and pointed out the findings. Harambee scored 95% higher in both district schools as well as similar schools and indicated that this is a Charter renewal metric that is listed on the ACE report.

David opened the floor for questions on attendance. Board member Wade asked if there are excused absences or does every absence simply count as an absence. David responded that an absence is an absence according to how they are being measured and according to their reporting of absences.

Collective Climb Partner/Restorative Justice

David reported on the grant that they received from the Commission on Crime and Delinquency. He shared his screen with members and reviewed from the slides the focus of the grant. He said that the social and emotional side of the grant lends itself to restorative practices. The group is called Collective Climb and they are asking them to come into the organization at three levels.

- Professional development
- Partnering and training with staff
- Consultant services and hands on engagement

David explained the focus would be restorative practices, de-escalation techniques, classroom management and conflict resolution. Professional development sessions will take place throughout the year focusing on restorative justice principles. Partnering and training with staff will be comprised of tailored sessions to enhance skills in managing classroom environments and addressing conflicts. Consultant Services will include hands-on engagement, including classroom observations, staff support, and direct conflict resolution circles. He said that the grant includes 85 hours of hands on onsite support for students at Harambee. David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked how long the grant will last and if this is a one-time grant. David responded that this is the pilot for the program and it is a two-year grant. David turned the meeting back to Greg and he turned the meeting to Dr. Archer for her report on Specializes Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Deleah shared her screen and presented the second part of the grant that they received from the Commission on Crime and Delinquency to address Social-Emotional Needs and Mental Health. She said that the other part of the grant focuses on the need for social and emotional wellbeing. She said that it is intended for the whole child. They are utilizing the funds to wrap their arms around both students and their families to provide therapeutic counseling support. The program will run January through May from 5-7:30pm Monday – Friday. As stated before they have two Doctors Dr. Iman (male) and Dr. Kay (female) that will provide Individual, Family, and Group counseling on-site at Harambee. She said that they are using the building to provide this service because it takes place where students and families already feel safe and they have already received great feedback.

Deleah said that the impact is to support 40-60 students and families with bi-weekly sessions. Also, the coordination of support with their counselors who will participate in the referral and intake process. Board member Renee asked if the services are for staff as well. Deleah said that the grant was written for students, but some of the staff do have children that attend the school. Board member Wade asked how many participants they have so far. Deleah responded that they have 17 students thus far.

BSE Audit–Wrap-Up March 2024

Deleah told members that every six years schools are evaluated by the BSE and theirs began last January 2023. She said that there were some findings that they had to review and update. The advisor for Harambee came out last week and was able to clear up a large portion of the findings. She will be coming back at the end of February to close out the few things that they have left to close out. She said that that are in compliance with Federal and local IDA laws.

SBAP–New System Maxcapture

Deleah said that there is a new program called Maxcapture and it provides additional funds to support special education by billing Medicaid.

National Junior Honor Society Induction February 2024

Deleah reported that the Junior Honor Society completed their first committee meeting and they will have induction on February 28th at 6:00pm. She invited Board members to attend.

Career Pathways Program June 2024

Deleah reported that the Career Pathways Program will occur in June 2024. It has been rescheduled to June instead of May to accommodate participants that would like to attend.

Deleah concluded her report and opened the floor to questions. Dr. Baynard inquired about the date and time of the induction ceremony. Deleah indicated February 28th at 6:00pm. Dr. Baynard pointed out that it is the same date as the Board meeting. Greg indicated that they would discuss a change in date and get back to the Board.

Budget, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle thanked the team for helping them to get through the audit. She said that they are moving on to the second half of their business cycle and looking forward to preparing for next year. She said the Board has received via email the Statement of Financial Interest Form. She said that they will be completing them and thanks to members who have returned them and reported any changes.

Michelle told members that they are in the midst of their 21st century monitoring. They have been working to prepare for the monitoring and did receive a pre-monitoring visit from a representative from the IU. They did receive a range of when the visit will take place sometime the first week in March.

Staffing

Michelle indicated that they have two openings, one in General Ed and they have a new hire slated to fill the position in April. Also, they have an upcoming Special Ed position that will need to be filled. Michelle concluded her report and turned it back to Greg.

Action Items:

Old Business: Board Retreat Re-Scheduling

Dr. Baynard asked if it would be best to send an email asking for everyone's availability. He said that he would send an email tomorrow morning asking for Board members responses.

New Business:

None

Public Concerns:

There were no public concerns

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

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

Next Public Meeting:

The next public Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison