

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday April 24th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 24th 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Charis Jackson
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Renee Whitby
Shawn Blue
Larry Bell

Board Members Absent:

Donna Holmes Lockett
C. Wade Mosely

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 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 March 27th Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the March 27th Board Meeting 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 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.

Approval: 6 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard turned the meeting over to Greg for the CEO report. 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

Boys Basketball

Greg reported that he was proud to announce that the boy's basketball team; The Harambee Heat completed an 18-0 season and became the Middle School champions. He gave kudos to the young men that persevered and to the athletic staff at Harambee. He said that it was also due to the support and morale of the organization. He urged everyone to go to the Harambee website where the team will be featured. They will also hold an athletic banquet to honor the boy's basketball team where they will receive Middle School citywide championship basketball jackets. Dr. Baynard commented that they have always wanted a city

award winning basketball team, especially since they have been a feeder for successful high school basketball teams. He said that it is only fitting that this year Harambee would take the championship and that the ancestors are with them.

Board member Larry asked if they have a girl's basketball team. Greg responded yes they do have a girl's team. He said that the girl's team made it to the semi-finals and were in the final four.

School Reorganization 2024-2025

Greg reported that they are well on their way to reorganizing the school for the 2024-2025 School Year. They are engaged in a series of meetings to reorganize the building. Meetings have taken place with Dr. Archer in terms of reorganizing the Specialized Services Program as they are receiving more students with exceptionality types and how they will make amendments and adjustments to the program. He said that they are reorganizing the building generally to be sure that the building will be ready to re-open in August.

Year-End Closing Protocols

Greg reported that they have a school-closing checklist that every senior leader, teacher and member of the organization is responsible for. This includes all construction and refresh projects, which allows them to close the school in an orderly fashion.

Summer Programming 2024

Greg reported that the information has gone out to parents to begin to sign up for the summer HASA program. The program will run from June 24th through July 18th. It is a four-week enrichment program and they expect to have a full program again this year.

Summer Leadership Retreat

Greg reported that the retreat is well underway. He said that each year they have a focus, which leads their work. In past retreats they have focused on Mission, Vision and Core Values and then moved on to being Data Driven and Systems Aligned. This past year they placed their full focus on Instruction. Those three pillars have led to all of the improvements that they have been able to accomplish over the past few years. He said that this year they will turn their attention to the MTSS program (Multi-tiered System of Support). The MTSS program is an intervention program designed to support students that may have challenges in attendance, instruction or behavior.

Greg indicated that they currently have an MTSS program but want to ensure that the program is delivered with more vigor so they will contract with an expert in MTSS Intervention and Support. He said that they met with the expert on Monday to discuss shaping their Leadership Retreat. The focus of the retreat in July will be on Student Support and Intervention through MTSS. The consultant

will come back in August to do training with the staff and will remain throughout the school year to help guide them and to be their eyes and ears for the program. Greg also mentioned that Harambee is a member of PCE (Pennsylvania Charters for Excellence) and they give out awards for excellence. He said that last year in third grade Math Harambee was listed as one of the top five most improved schools in the city of Philadelphia. He gave Kudos to Nakia, the Instructional team and to the third grade Math teacher. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions. He turned the floor over to Nakia for her report on Instruction.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

Nakia reported that she would not have a lot this evening as they are currently preparing for the PSSA and reorganizing the organization.

Curriculum

Preparing for the Spring Curriculum Project

Nakia reported that they are preparing for the 2024-2025 school year. They are ordering materials for the 2024-2025 school year and looking at the new implementations. In the ELA department they are conducting inter-departmental surveys to think about what is working and to learn about what teachers like and how they can improve so that they can prepare for their annual curriculum refresh.

Instruction

K-6 Science Fair

Nakia reported that they conducted the first Science Fair since she has been at Harambee. Students in grades K-6 created individual projects as well as class projects. They held a Science Fair in which members of the community attended. The police department, the library and parents all came out to serve as judges.

In addition, two of their student's projects were selected for the George Washington Carver Science Fair and those students had an opportunity to go to Temple University to compete in the Carver Science Fair. One of Harambee's 5th grade students was awarded honorable mention in the area of "Young Engineer" for his project on sound and sound pollution.

Unannounced Observations

Nakia reported that they are in the process of unannounced observations and she has completed 60% of the building. The targeted deadline for completing observations for teachers and Para professionals is in May and she reported that she is on target for completion by May.

Honor Roll Acknowledgements

Nakia reported that they had their honor roll celebrations this month. They had approximately 250 students across K-8 that were recognized for honor roll, which was a great point of pride for them.

Assessment

PSSA Preparation

Nakia reported that today was their first day of PSSA testing and it was a very strong day of testing. They had six classes that had 100% attendance and they plan to shout them out on class DOJO and will also enter their names in a raffle to win prizes. She said that they are poised for another strong day of testing. They are doing ELA this week, next week they have two days of Mathematics and the following week two days of Science for students in grades 4-8. She said that the testing window is April 24th through May 8th. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Greg turned the meeting over to David for his report on Operations.

Operations, David Rosario

School Reorganization

David reported that they are reviewing their student lists and plan to turn over their roster as required by the CSO.

Upcoming Proposals

David reported that they like to recognize some of the items that they need in order to move the school forward. He said in looking at the growth of their Special Education program and needs of the building, they are looking at putting proposals in place for upgrades to the school. David told members that proposals have already been sent to the CEO's office and are going forward through the process.

Updated Food Service Contract 2024-2025

David reported that the food service contract is up for bid. He said that they currently have ads out in a couple of newspapers and they have received the beginnings of some of the bids for the contract. He said that their current food contractor has been a good partner with Harambee, however, they have to follow protocol and look at all of the bids that come in to ensure that their students receive the best possible nourishment.

David reported that they have also placed their fresh fruits and vegetables proposal for 2024-2025. He said that the program was well received by both students and staff. He believes that the program was largely successful and noted that some students liked it and others were open to the experience.

David concluded his report and opened the floor to questions. Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

ESY 2024

Dr. Archer reported that she would not have much to present today. She stated that they are currently planning for the Extended School Year 2024, which is

required for their students with IEP's. She told members that their ESY schedule will follow the same schedule as HASA, with the exception that it will only run for a half day from 9-12. It is not a full day program.

PASA Testing 2024

Dr. Archer reported that they have six students that are currently participating in the (Pennsylvania Alternative State Assessment) PASA Program. These students are enrolled in the specialized learning support program for students with complex needs. The program is going well with a current 100% participation rate and they had a great day of testing.

Career Pathways Program June 2024

Dr. Archer reported that they are gearing up for their Career Pathways Program. The counselors are reaching out to students that participated last year and looking for new participants for this year. The program will take place in the last week of June, which is also the last week of school. She said that there would be further information coming soon. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle for her report on Business, Finance and HR.

Business, Finance and HR- Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that her office is preparing to close the year with a number of reports and assessing their financial status. They are working with each of the departments and the CEO to prepare their 2024-2025 budget. They met with the finance committee and provided a presentation on where they are with the budget. They are making sure that all of their ESSER funding is recorded, reported properly and reflected in the budget. Michelle said that she has mentioned in previous meetings that this would be the final year for the ESSER funding which will end in September 2024.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that they are recruiting year round in order to be properly staffed. She said that she and other executive leaders have been interviewing and have had a couple of offers for new staff members.

Michelle reported that as of today, they have three possible openings in Special Education for the next School Year. She noted that they also have two General Education teachers that they are recruiting for as well. She asked members if any of them have any suggestions or know of any candidates that might be interested, to please forward them to her. She informed members that they have filled the Human Resources Representative position that they desperately needed. She is looking forward to the position being filled on July 1st. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Dr. Baynard asked Michelle to explain what the ESSER funding was used for and what they will do to compensate in the absence of those funds. Michelle

explained that there were three buckets of funding. She said that the first waive of funding was under ESSER I. She said that it was mainly spent towards Covid relief in preparing the building for staff and students to return to the building and for a lot of the remote learning that took place.

She explained that the second waive of funding was under ESSER II and was mainly used for preparing the building, learning loss, materials, staffing and support staffing. She said that they increased their support staff and summer learning. She said that there was also a gap in their in 21st Century funding from January of 2022 to October of 2022, where they used some of the ESSER II funding to supplement so that they could continue After School and Summer School for that year.

Michelle explained that the third waive of spending was the ARP ESSER funds that were mainly used for their Capital Improvement Projects like air quality and windows.

Michelle said that the way in which they will prepare for funding when ESSER no longer exists is by attentively looking for various grants. She said that there are a number of grants forthcoming and some that they have already written and have approval for. Michelle indicated that this is one strategy to keep the streams of funding coming in. She said that other organizations used their funding mainly for staffing, but Harambee did not so she doesn't see a big adjustment on the ground. However, they are still looking at what it looks like without that level of funding.

Dr. Baynard commended Michelle and those on the leadership team for spending the funds judiciously and making Harambee a better organization. He gave kudos for a great execution of the funds.

Michelle turned the meeting back to Dr. Baynard and he opened the floor to the Board for any questions, comments or concerns. Board member Jan asked where they are with hiring the person for HR. Michelle responded that they have filled the Human Resources Representative position and the new person will be starting in July.

Action Items:

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

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

Approval: AYE: 6 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 2

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Submitted by Jenita Lunsford, Board Liaison