

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday June 26th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, June 26th 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
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Shawn Blue
Larry Bell
Donna Holmes Lockett

Board Members Absent:

Charis Jackson
C. Wade Mosely
Renee Whitby

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Danielle Bryant	Executive Assistant to the CEO
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)

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 May 29th Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the May 29th Board Meeting Minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no additions or corrections. Board member Jan made a motion seconded by Board member Larry 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: 5 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 3

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

Year End Activities

Greg reported that they have concluded the 2023-2024 school year and stated that it was another amazing school year filled with great activities, great energy and great data. He said that they had another great African street festival, which brought a great amount of joy to the students and school community.

Celebration of Excellence

Greg reported that their Celebration of Excellence was once again a great event that celebrated four award winners. He said that those teachers were well-deserved honorees.

Staff Year End Appraisals

Greg reported that their staff appraisals have been completed for the 2023-2024 school year. He gave many thanks to the executive team who performed the appraisals on their line staff.

Summer Program 2024

Greg reported that the 2024 summer program opened for staff on Monday, June 24th 2024 and opened for students on Tuesday, June 25th 2024. They have 130 students enrolled for their summer HASA program. It is fully operational with instruction, enrichment and great partnerships.

Summer Leadership Retreat

Greg reported that the Summer Leadership Retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, July 17th, Thursday, July 18th and Friday July 19th. He gave thanks to Danielle who has been their logistics point person for the retreat. He said that their focus for the retreat this year will be on MTSS. In the past the focus was on Mission, Vision and Core Values and then they moved on to being Data Driven and Systems Aligned. He said that they moved from there to placing their full focus on Instruction. Now that they have a budding and advanced Instructional Program, they have moved to providing support for children to provide students with a systemic approach around support and intervention. He said that he is looking forward to this year's retreat as they continue to grow their program.

Greg gave Kudos to the HR team for a great round of hires for the upcoming school year. He highlighted the fact that they concluded the 2023-2024 school year exceeding their metric of fully certified school teachers with 77% of their homeroom teachers being fully certified. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions. He turned the meeting over to Nakia for her report on Curriculum and Instruction.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

Curriculum

Summer Reading Projects

Nakia reported that all students in grades K-8 are required to complete a grade specific summer reading from a curated list that has been researched and put together by their instructional staff. The students have the opportunity to read two mandatory and two optional books from the list. The students are asked to keep a literacy journal in response to the books that they read. The 8th grade class is working on getting a live conversation with the books so that they can have discourse with their teachers and peers in real time. The students are also given a packet, which contains a library application to obtain a library card if needed and the locations of all of the libraries in the area and across the city of Philadelphia. Nakia said that the focus of their Summer Reading Project is to decrease the summer slide and increase the learning and gains that were made throughout the school year.

Instruction

PSSA Preliminary Data in Progress

Nakia reported that they have begun the process of segregating some of the preliminary PSSA data. They received the first and second sets of data yesterday and are currently going through the data and will have a full report when they come before the Board in the fall. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Jan noted that she realizes that they cannot be specific right now but asked how everything is looking. Nakia responded that things look promising and while they still have work to do she is very pleased with what they are seeing thus far.

Board member Larry asked that once the data is analyzed would it be possible for them to send something out to the Board rather than wait throughout the summer and until the next meeting. Greg responded that they have to wait until the data is official. Nakia also responded and explained that the data does not come out until the fall and that they have to wait on the Department of Education. The Department of Education does not release the information until the end of September or early October that everyone will see across the state.

Dr. Baynard asked what is the purpose of sharing preliminary data with schools if there can be significant variances between the preliminary data and the official reports.

Greg responded that the difference is that there can be a 2-3% difference in the data based upon attribution. He said for students that transfer in and out of Harambee, they must determine what percentage of time the student has spent with Harambee and how much of that time is attributed to the Harambee data. He said that they are still scrubbing Harambee data because they have in the past seen a swing in the data. Before they go on public record with an official number, Greg said that they want to be sure that the numbers are accurate and solid.

Operations, Greg on behalf of David Rosario

Greg reported that David is on vacation and he would be reporting on David's behalf.

Summer Contractor Projects

Greg reported that their Summer Contractor Projects are underway and they include the transformation of the trailer in the schoolyard to accommodate an additional classroom. The project began on Monday June 17th.

Power wash and Paint Front Façade

Greg reported that they are continuing with the ESSER projects and they are power washing and painting the front façade of the building to match the new siding. He gave kudos to Michelle for selecting the paint colors for the siding. He said that those two projects conclude the ESSER projects, which will conclude on September 30th.

Summer Refresh Projects 2024

Greg reported that their summer refresh projects will begin this week and include painting of the interior of the building as well as treads on the stairwell and various other refresh projects that will take place in order to get them ready for an August 12th launch and reopening.

Summer Cleaning Projects 2024

Greg reported that the summer cleaning projects are well underway. They are stripping the floors in all of the classrooms and all of the hallways. They have condensed the Summer Program to one floor and the other 2 thirds of the building are available for cleaning. Once the Summer Program concludes on July 8th the main floor, common areas, the gym and the cafeteria will have to be cleaned.

Technology Updates 2024 Increasing Bandwidth

Greg reported that he and David are working on strengthening their bandwidth to maximize power. They have already moved to a 5G-technology program, however they have learned that the Secretary of Education has mandated that in the 2025-2026 school year all PSSA assessments will have to be done online. They want to make sure that a year in advance they are strengthening their bandwidth to maximum power because they will be placing more than 300 students online at once taking the PSSA assessment. He said that they know going into the 2025-2026 school year, every school district in the commonwealth will be doing the same.

Food Service RFP Update

Greg reported that the food service RFP has been awarded to their current provider- Whitsons. They have been very satisfied with their food service delivery so they have been selected again this year. Greg concluded the report for Operations and opened the floor for questions. He turned the floor to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer Compliance

Dr. Archer reported that they are ending the school year with 85 students that were in the program. The students that received specialized services are as follows. Here is the breakdown.

85 total students in the program

IEP students =74
GIEP students = 3
504 students =7
APS students =1

Operational Data Extended School Year 2024

Dr. Archer reported that they started the ESY Program and had 27 students that qualified. She said that they have approximately 12 students that are incoming from the new year that have special needs. In July she will begin going through those documents as she closes out this year with their state compliance forms. She will start working on next year in July and will bring parents in on transition planning and to discuss the students needs. For those students that are coming from early intervention they will begin the re-evaluation process as required by law.

New Emotional Support Program

Dr. Archer reported that she would be working with the emotional support teacher to further develop that program. In addition, they received some preliminary data back from PASA and their students did really well. She said that they have some growth in that area and they are really excited. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor to questions. Greg turned the meeting over to Michelle for her report on Business and Finance.

Business, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle shared her screen and asked everyone to recall that at the last meeting they had not received the final numbers from the district or the state on what their per pupil rate would be for the new school year. She turned everyone's attention to a document that she shared and indicated that everyone should be familiar with it. She highlighted the funding for the Charter Schools per pupil rate. She said that every district in the commonwealth receives the PDE 363, which determines the revenue that they will receive from each district that they have a student residing in. It is the funding for Charter Schools for the 2024-2025 school year and is based on estimates from the prior year.

Michelle told members that they had projected a 5% increase in each of the two categories, a 5% increase in the general education per pupil rate and a 5% increase in the special education rate. She said that the final numbers equal a 10% increase vs. a 5% increase and with that they have an additional 490,000 dollars that will be included in their budget for the 2024-2025 school year. She said for now they will roll those funds into their contingency.

Human Resources

Michelle gave an update and highlighted where they are in terms of recruitment. She said that in the current year they did release 4 staff members, 2 in Special Education, 1 in General Education and 1 Support staff. They have also been recruiting, interviewing and onboarding. They have added 4 new staff members,

1 in Special Education and 3 in General Education. She said that 3 of the 4 teachers are certified, with 2 strong Math teachers. They do still have 3 openings in Special Education and have 2 candidates that are currently in the pipeline. Michelle asked members for any recommendations or referrals that they might have to please send them her way. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. Dr. Baynard asked if she has job descriptions for the open positions and asked her to send them to the Board. She agreed to send them. Michelle turned the meeting back to Greg for final comments.

Greg commented that they hired an amazing Art teacher last year and commissioned him to do a mural of Joe Foster. He said that in the fall after school opens, probably in late September they will dedicate the courtyard in Joe Fosters memory and honor. He will send out save the date invitations and will coordinate it with Joe's wife. He asked all members to be sure to attend and said that the mural inside of the building will be complete in the next few weeks. He said that it is beautiful and invited everyone to come into the building to see it. Greg concluded and opened the floor for final questions ad comments.

Board member Larry said that he read that David had been promoted and asked if an announcement would be made. Greg responded that an announcement would be made and that all of their executive leaders have earned new titles with new two-year contracts instead of a year-to-year contract. The new contracts will begin on July 1.

Action Items:

Approval of May Minutes

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

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

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

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 28th 2024