

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday September 25th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, September 25, 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
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Larry Bell
Charis Jackson
C. Wade Mosely
Renee Whitby
Donna Holmes Lockett
Shawn Blue

Board Members Absent:

none

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Danielle Bryant	Compliance Officer
Nakia Brown	Chief Academic Officer
David Rosario	Chief of Operations and Administration
Deleah Archer	Chief of Student Support & Innovation
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison
Heloise Jettison	Prospective Board Member

Libation (Board member Renee Whitby)

Libation was lead by Board member and cultural leader Renee Whitby

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Heloise Jettison- Prospective Board Member

Heloise introduced herself and stated that she attended the meeting as a prospective Board member and is present awaiting a vote by the Board this evening.

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 August 28th & September 9th Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Special Session Board Meeting Minutes that took place on September 9th and the regularly scheduled Board Meeting Minutes on August 28th 2024. 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 Jan 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: 8 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 0

Dr. Baynard opened the meeting by acknowledging the dedication of the courtyard in honor of Baba Joe Foster. He asked members if they had any reflections that they wanted to share. Board member Renee shared that it was a very emotional moment for her. She said that the ceremony was a beautiful recognition of Baba Joe and the mural of him is also beautiful. She said that the leadership committee did a very good job and that the outside of the building is just beautiful.

Board member Jan expressed that she thoroughly agreed with Board member Renee's comments. She said that it was so fitting for Baba Joe to be recognized in that manner. She said that everyone that spoke about him talked about how he worked for and pushed for everyone. She said that this was someone who gave his life with energy and love for the children.

Dr. Baynard told Greg and the leadership team that it was a very moving and emotional time and was Harambee at its best. He said that it was an incredible coming together of the community and he thanked the leadership team for their efforts.

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

Baba Joe Day and Dedication

Greg reported that the dedication was a tremendous success. He gave thanks to the leadership team and staff for their efforts. He said that it was a pleasure to see all of the faces with warmth and love for Baba Joe. Many thanks to the Harambee leadership team and staff for their support in putting together the courtyard. He said that he continues to get text messages and communication from people that attended or watched it by live stream. He said that the feedback has been astronomical and Baba Joe will continue to live on in each of us everyday.

African American Charter School Coalition Event

Greg reported that the African American Charter School Coalition will sponsor their signature fundraising event tomorrow evening. They will honor city council person Isaiah Thomas and Hardy Williams who have championed Black Charter Schools. He said that Harambee will be represented at the event and he is very excited about their partnership with the coalition. The coalition is comprised of 13 African led Charter School organizations, which encompasses 24 schools.

HASA Program Update

Greg reported that the HASA program is scheduled to begin on October 7th. He has been meeting and planning the launch with the Harambee Leadership team. It was last reported that they have 238 students registered along with an additional 60 students that are either athletes, cheer leaders or drill team members. They are participating in HASA along with their athletic activities. The total enrollment in the HASA program is approaching 300 for the season.

HITS Program Update

Greg reported that their HITS program is the instructional program lead by Nakia Brown and the instructional team. It is designed to support those students who fell just below proficient or advanced. The Hits program will begin one month later than the HASA program and will start in the beginning of November. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade commented that the HASA program seems large and he asked Greg if they are in good shape with staffing. Greg responded that they are in good shape with staffing and they will continue to lean into their focus around STEM activities.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

Instruction

Instructional Coaches Training

Nakia reported that they have three fully released instructional coaches and two Para professional coaches. They have had a series of instructional coaches trainings provided on a weekly basis on Wednesdays. They are also planning a weekend retreat for the coaches that will provide even more detailed training and support.

Classroom Data Collection

Nakia reported that they are in the classroom data collection phase. They have been doing quick visits and walkthroughs in the classrooms. They are looking for the alignment between scope and sequence and the teachers' lessons to ensure that the pacing guide is being followed. Nakia said that this gives them a glimpse into teachers practice on a daily basis.

Teacher Check-In and Grade Meetings

Nakia reported they have completed their first diagnostic. She and the coaches are in the phase of doing teacher check-ins and grade meetings. She said that once they receive the data, they analyze the data with the teachers to determine what their academic targets are and how it matches with the school academic targets. Then they start action planning with their curriculum partner I-Ready on Friday at the professional development training. A part of their action planning

includes sending home the data reports to parents and having 1:1 data chats with students so that everyone is aware of the data and what their targets are.

Nakia stated that they are currently still waiting for their PSSA data to come in from the state. They are expecting it to come in any day now. She said that they are waiting and looking forward to sharing that information with the team. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Renee asked if there is a cultural calendar of dates for the cultural events that are happening at the school. Nakia said that yes there is a cultural calendar and she would send it to Board member Renee. Dr. Baynard asked Nakia what she could tell them about the way students are starting this year and has she seen a difference in their summer slide. He asked if the students are starting more proficient this year than last.

Nakia responded that the preliminary base line data is stronger this year than last year and reflects that they are starting from a better place this year both in ELA and Mathematics. She said that they are seeing less of a summer slide this year than last so they are starting from a stronger place.

Board member Wade asked Nakia how does the PSSA data get formally integrated into bench marking. She said that once the PSSA data comes in they will compare it to how they did on the baseline assessment and then they will start to action plan. The data will indicate how the students did as a grade and which specific area the student performed well in and which specific area the student did not perform as well and they use the data to inform their instructional decisions.

Operations, David Rosario **School Flashers Installed**

David reported that the school flashers have been installed. They are the 15 MPH signs that were installed for the school. He said that the city came out to train their security staff on the digital timers. David said that the process has been very interesting and collaborative. The flashers are on a digital timer for their half days, full days, arrivals and dismissals. He said that they now have a very comprehensive package for safety.

Board member Jan asked if they also have speed bumps on the street to compliment the flashers. David responded that the speed bumps would be phase II. Greg said that they have to petition the City Streets department for the speed bumps because it is a function of the City. He said that they are currently requisitioning them to have speed bumps installed on 66th Street between Media and Haverford.

Parent Portal

David reported that they now have the parent portal with 300 families of clean data. He said that this is another avenue for parent communication that can be sent out to families. He said that they tested the system with a QR code to get families to sign up. They also followed up to be sure that the communication was bilateral and that the pathways were clean for communication. He said that this gives them another avenue for outreach that matches with their technology.

Smoothie Implementation September 27th

David reported that Michelle was able to secure a grant in addition to their food service. They had a Smoothie implementation meeting on Monday and the implementation will take place on October 7th. They now have 2 carts that will be assembled and they will have one fully serviced smoothie cart in front of the school and another in the cafeteria operated by food service staff. David concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked if there is a way that they can invite parents to join the Board meetings through the parent portal. David said that he would look into making that connectivity and get back to him. Greg turned the meeting to Deleah for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer **School Fair 9/27-9/28**

Dr. Archer reported that they will host their School Fair on Friday September 27th through Saturday September 29th. She stated that it is a K-12 at the convention center. They have school staff and alumni that will be representing Harambee for those two days. She said that they get a lot of traction from the school fair and it is a great opportunity to show case Harambee.

Gregory Shannon Empowerment Expedition aka HBCU GOTB Tour

Dr. Archer reported that they are well under way with the Gregory Shannon Empowerment Expedition Tour formerly known as the HBCU Get on the Bus GOTB tour. They decided to rename the tour in honor of the CEO who has always championed this event and supported the student's exploration. She said that the event will take place on October 15th through 19th this year. They will visit schools in Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. They are going to visit Cheyney, Lincoln, Hampton and North Carolina A&T. They will take 30 students and 5 adults on the tour.

Dr. Archer told members that in an effort to support this venture they have received a \$1500.00 donation from Lincoln University and they are always looking for further donations if any of the members would like to donate. They will also be hosting a school wide popcorn fundraiser on October 30th through November 4th. They will post the General Harambee Popcorn Store on the Harambee website. She asked members to share the information with their

networks as they are looking forward to funds to support the great things that they do at Harambee.

National Junior Honor Society

Dr. Archer reported that they re-activated the Ruby Bridges Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society at Harambee last year. They had 11 students that reactivated the chapter and a few have graduated leaving 8 students still remaining. They plan to attend the National Junior Honor Society Conference that will take place in Chicago in January 31st through February 2nd 2025. It is a weekend leadership conference for students and they will be working with the students to fundraise in preparation for the conference.

Homebound Instruction Report

Dr. Archer reported that they have one student that is receiving homebound instruction. She said that this is new for her in all of the years that she has been with Harambee. She said that they have provided the proper documentation to the state and have completed the report. They are following the student and the student is actively receiving homebound instruction from one of their teachers at Harambee.

Child Find Report–Due 12/1

Dr. Archer reported that they are well underway with completing their Child Find Report which is due on December 1st. They had a high number of students that joined them through kindergarten and first grade that received early intervention services. Those students have to complete the re-evaluation process and they are well under way with getting those evaluations done. She said that the school psychologist checked in with her last week and they are 2 weeks ahead of schedule.

Comp. Ed. Settlement Agreements

Dr. Archer reported that she included information in the Board packets on two (2) Compensatory ED cases that have been settled. They were sent to the Board for approval in order to finalize and close those two cases.

Dr. Archer completed her report and opened the floor for questions. Board member Donna asked for the times of the school fair. Dr. Archer responded that the times are Friday 3pm. to 6pm. and Saturday from 10am. to 6pm. at the Philadelphia Convention Center.

Board member Renee asked Dr. Archer to explain how home bound instruction works. Dr. Archer explained that they may have a student that is unable to attend school for a number of reasons and in those cases they receive confidential documentation on the student. A teacher will go to the home and provide 6 hours a week of reading, math, science and social studies.

Dr. Baynard commented that there is a point of correction. He said that the Board was not provided with actual documentation on the two Compensatory ED cases. He said that after a conversation that he had with Dr. Archer they determined that the amounts do not rise to the level of Board approval.

Board member Wade asked if the 30 students attending the bus tour would all be Moors and what is the overall budget for the trip. Dr. Archer said that there would be a mix of both the Moors and Akan's, that they have consistently taken both. She said that the overall budget this time is not as expensive as the previous and they are trying to keep it under \$50,000.00. Greg turned the meeting to Michelle for her report on Business and Finance.

Business and Finance, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that the business office is very busy and in the midst of their annual audit. They have a proposed draft that will be presented to the board at the November Board meeting. The Board will have it for 30 days for approval at the December Board meeting. She said that that they also have an AARP ESSER audit in progress and they have a site visit coming up from the state on October 15th. They have a number of grants and reports that are due for August and September that they are currently finalizing.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that the Board shared several points that they would like for her to cover, but she and her team did not have time to put a hard copy report together. She indicated that they would create a hard copy report to provide to the Board.

She shared her screen for a Bamboo IS system walk through and led members through a detailed demonstration that provided answers to the questions that were posed by the Board. She indicated that the HRIS system was implemented in 2016 and before the system was implemented they had a manual and paper filing system and record retention system. She said that since the systems implementation they are now 100 % electronic in maintaining employee information.

She navigated through the system and demonstrated how to use the system to produce the data on employees that was requested by the Board. She described how the data could be aggregated and pointed out the systems ability to sort, extract and provide a graph of information for all employees. She further highlighted the systems features and ability to provide information both demographically and logistically. Michelle added that they are working to ensure that they are Charter Renewal ready.

She said that one of the things that the Board asked her to supply was a list of new hires. She demonstrated how she obtains that information from the report portal and reviewed many of the features that provide information on different

aspects of the employee groups. She showed how to obtain status on new hires, additions and terminations. She also looked at full time vs. part time employees and reviewed the difference between a regular employee and one that provides contracted services and also those services that they seek through agencies. She reviewed the number of staff in each department and how that information could be sorted.

Michelle said that another question that was asked by the Board was who is the current HR director. She advised the Board that the new HR Representative is Janae Carmichael whose resume, background and experience she highlighted through the system.

Michelle said that another question that was asked is whether Finance and HR are separate entities. She responded no, that in most organizations HR, Business and Finance are all together.

The next question was whether the HR director would be delivering reports at Board meetings. She said no not at this time. She said that direct reports are involved with helping to prepare the reports.

Michelle told members that those are the questions that were presented to her for a response. She said that she would prepare all of the questions in a nice packaged report and she should be able to deliver it to the Board in the next week or so. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Larry asked if the HR person is a contractor or employee. Michelle responded that Janae is a full time employee.

Board member Larry asked if a full time employee is reporting to a contractor since Michelle is a contractor. Michelle indicated that her status has changed from contractor to employee. Board member Larry said that these are things that would be good for the Board to know. He said that the Board should be informed on all promotions of Senior Leadership and as a member of the Executive committee he did not know anything about any of the promotions.

He said that there are a least 4 people that have received promotions over the past year and he has not seen anything come to the Board to even let them know that those changes were made, including the fact that Michelle is full time now. He said that he has not seen anything come to the Board indicating that she moved from contractor to full time.

Michelle responded and suggested that they assemble an HR committee to help with delivering information to ensure that the Board is well informed. Board member Larry said that they did form a committee but whether they have a committee or not, when there are changes in the executive leadership, that information needs to come to the Board. Michelle responded that it is well noted.

Prospective Board member Heloise asked if the HRIS system has the capacity to provide status for someone who is in process. Michelle responded yes it can do most things that they need it to do. She said that most of the information that they have set up in the system is designed for easy reporting for them. Yes they can see the status of each person's certification.

Dr. Baynard asked to be reminded of what the percentage of certified teachers is required. Michelle said that it is 75% from a Charter School requirement and from a federal title I requirement it is 100% certified.

Dr. Baynard asked if Harambee falling under 60% feels like a crisis or non-crisis. Michelle responded that she would not label it a crisis, it is consistent with what is happening across the board and Harambee is in a much better position than most of their peers. She said that it is a high priority for Harambee. Dr. Baynard asked if she thinks they will get better at recruitment now that they have someone whose role is specific to recruitment. Michelle said yes, definitely they are really looking forward to getting out and doing outreach.

Board member Jan asked if the teachers of record of most of the classes are certified. She said yes the teachers of record for core content are certified and she thinks that they are at 67%. She said that 2-3 teachers becoming certified would place them in compliance at 75%.

Board member Wade asked if it is just core content teachers that need certification or all instructional teachers. Michelle said that there are some instructional positions that are not required to be in that number of certified teachers. He asked if the 3 people that were terminated were terminated for performance. She said that the system labels it as terminated but all 3 resigned.

Dr. Baynard asked if they currently have exit interviews and is there learning from those remarks. She said yes, there is a module in the system for exit interviews and they also have exit surveys. Greg added that they found that many teachers just could not hold up to the weight of the expectations.

Board member Jan asked if Nakia is a part of the incoming interviews and also the exit interviews as well. Michelle said yes all of their Executive leaders are a part of the interviewing process but the Business and HR side as part of their process handles most of the exit interviews. Michelle turned the meeting back to Greg. Greg indicated that this would conclude their updates for the evening and turned the floor back to Dr. Baynard.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

Action Items

1) Vote: Approval of Board Appointee, Heloise Jettison

Motion: Board member Jan made a motion to accept Heloise Jettison as a new Board member, seconded by Board member Larry. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

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

2) Vote: Approval of ATSI Title 1 Comprehensive Plan 2024-2027

Greg Shannon, CEO explained the plan before a vote. He shared that it is a statewide template, which is provided to them with a road map to data collection, analysis and action planning around a series of metrics for their performance. It aggregates their performance into categories. Every School District and Charter School across the Commonwealth is obligated to produce and then follow it. It is utilized as their road map to success over a three-year term.

Dr. Baynard asked if this is the first one that they have produced during his tenure. Greg said that it is the second or third during his tenure.

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to approve the ATSI Comprehensive Plan seconded by Board member Renee. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

3) Recommendation to convene in person

Dr. Baynard told members that he would send out a pole for members to determine which month everyone would like to convene.

Motion to Adjourn: Board member Wade made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Board member Jan. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 30, 2024