

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday October 30th 2024

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, October 30th 2024 at 6:31 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:31p.m.

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard
Jan Gillespie- Walton
Larry Bell
Charis Jackson
C. Wade Mosely
Renee Whitby
Donna Holmes Lockett
Shawn Blue
Heloise Jettison

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

Libation (Board member Renee Whitby)

Libation was lead by Board member and cultural leader Renee Whitby

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Harambee Counselor, Goldie Barnes was introduced to the Board to share a presentation of a visit to the State Capitol that she facilitated for Harambee students.

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 September 25th Board Meeting Minutes

Dr. Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Board Meeting Minutes from the September 25th meeting. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were two corrections noted. The minutes required 2 amendments to reflect that Board member Shawn Blue was present at the last meeting on September 25th and that the votes from the last meeting reflect her vote being counted. The Board Liaison acknowledged the changes and made the corrections accordingly.

Motion:

Board member Wade made a motion seconded by Board member Renee to accept the minutes as presented with all corrections. All were in favor, none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

Approval: 9 AYE: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 0

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

School District of Philadelphia Charter School Office Convening

Greg reported that earlier this month the School District of Philadelphia had all Charter School leaders convene to work on amending the Charter Renewal framework. Danielle is the Compliance Officer for Harambee and she attended the meeting and represented Harambee. There have been many conversations over the past two to three years regarding the Charter School framework and how it might be reevaluated or reviewed.

He said that most recently the Charter School office sent out a survey document to all of the CEO's and Charter School Board Presidents through out the city. The survey included the renewal metric and asked for feedback and information to make the metric more efficient and more equitable. Greg said that he shared the document with Dr. Baynard as the School District asked for feedback and information from Charter School leaders relative to the framework. He said that throughout the 2024-2025 school year there will be lots of meetings an input into what the new framework could look like. He said that he would keep everyone updated as additional information is shared.

HPA Parent Meeting Update

Greg reported they had their first HPA Parent meeting this month. They were very pleased with the information and turnout. He said that they have an amazing partnership with the Tiger Woods Golf and STEM academy, which is building a new golf course very close to Harambee. He said that the Tiger Woods Golf and STEM academy representatives were out presenting information to the parents about STEM opportunity workshops, which occur in the evenings and on weekends. They also shared information around their Title I and 21st Century Program.

Academic Period #1 Update

Greg reported their academic period 1 closed on October 29th. He said that they have just concluded the first marking period and they have moved into the second marking period. He said that the closure of the first marking period gives them an opportunity to look at their school launch data such as student attendance, instructional and academic performance and student discipline. It provides a great sample size of information and data to be able to make the necessary course corrections as they move through the school year and that process has begun.

HASA / HITS Update

Greg reported that Nakia and her team have looked at instructional data and are beginning to make some adjustments in terms of student assignments in homerooms. David and his team have looked at student attendance data and have begun to review the chronically truant process. He said that aligned with

their retreat this past summer, they placed a heavy emphasis on the MTSS process. He said that all of the adjustments (instructional, student attendance and behavioral health) that have been made thus far are generated through their MTSS program, which is formalized and structured this year.

Greg also reported that the HASA program is up and running and in its 5th week now. They have lots of great partnerships and lots of great activities for the students. He reported that the HITS program will begin in two weeks. All daytime operational programs are up and running with great efficiency as well as their After School 21st Century Program that takes place in the late afternoon. He said that they had a great school opening and are now in the throws of the school year in an orderly, organized and efficient manner. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked if the Parent night was participatory where the parents had the opportunity to ask questions. Greg responded yes, it was participatory.

Board member Wade asked a second question. He asked with regard to the Charter School is the objective to change ACE at some point in time or is it less structural. Greg responded that it is a lot more structural. He gave an example indicating that sometimes the Charter metric is redundant and there may be a metric by which they are evaluated by the state and the state supersedes the School District. He said the School District would come in behind the state and ask for the same data or same evaluation. He said that one of the recommendations over the years has been if the state has asked for this data and it passed the metric for the state then why is there a subsequent metric or evaluation by the School District, shouldn't they be one in the same. He stated that others have also pointed out that there are inequities relative to the metric and/or the data evaluation.

Board member Heloise asked how often do they have the HPA meetings with the parents. Greg responded that the meetings are every other month. Greg turned the meeting to Nakia for her report on Instruction.

Instruction, Nakia Brown **Curriculum**

I Ready - Professional Development Empowering Students

Nakia reported that they have concluded their first marking period. They have reviewed the data and made some corrections. She said that they brought in their I Ready partners in September and October to do continuous training to help their teachers, Instructional Coaches and her team to better utilize the program and to be able to get the best out of the program. She said that their entire October program was focused on empowering students through differentiation. She said that this allows them to meet students where they are and service all students on their instructional level, which is directly aligned with their MTSS plan. In their students bottom group for example, the planning with I Ready

professional development was around interventions to support those students that might not be performing well. Nakia stated that it also gave them the opportunity to address those students that are performing well and making sure that they also get what they need. Overall, it was a well received professional development training from their I Ready partners.

Instruction

Set the Stage Program- An introduction to Musical Theatre

Nakia told members that she wanted to highlight a new partnership that they have developed with the Kimmel Center. She said that in October they hosted visiting Artists from the Kimmel Center. They came to the 4th and 6th grade classes and gave an introduction to Musical Theatre. They provided in-service activities so that the students would get a taste of the different parts of musical theatre. She said that on November 7th those same students will be going to the Kimmel Center to see a live musical show.

Informal Observations Round (October 3- October 18)

Nakia reported that they have finished their first round of informal observations. This provides teachers with an assessment of where they are, what their professional strengths are, what their areas of growth are and aligning them with their instructional coaches to prepare them for formal observations, which begin this week.

Assessment

Nakia reported that they just finished their unit assessments and the teachers are in the assessment-planning phase. They are submitting their weekly assessment data to Nakia and the instructional coaches. She said that they use the weekly assessment data to develop action plans individually with the teachers in their classrooms. Each week in Reading and ELA the students take an assessment every 5-7 days. She reviews the data with the teachers and coaches and they discuss what some of the barriers could be that are hindering learning. As part of the plan they create a reteach plan. They walk the students through the reteach plan and then re-test the students to reach mastery. Nakia said that this is a system that they started last year that has proven to be successful in helping both students and teachers reach academic success. Nakia concluded report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee asked Nakia to provide her with more information on the Musical Theatre program and partnership with the Kimmel Center. Nakia said that it is a program through the Kimmel Center and the Schools. The program is titled Set the Stage. The Kimmel center sends visiting artist to schools to provide background information on how musical theatre works and on what takes place behind the scenes of a production. They explained the many different roles that artist are trained for and demonstrated how plays are put together on Broadway and in Philadelphia. They talked about all of the parts of a production that one

wouldn't see on stage. The students were very excited and eager to learn about the process. Nakia said that they plan to get additional classes involved as well.

Dr. Baynard said that he doesn't get the sense that they understand what the progress of the students is academically. He said that it would be great to know what the data story is telling them. He said that he doesn't expect it at this meeting but at the next meeting he would like to know what the data story is telling them. Nakia said that she plans to present their PSSA data at the next meeting. The data that she will present directly aligns with the variables that impact the student's growth, which they will see when she presents the PSSA data. She said that the outcomes are good and what they are doing is working.

Board member Wade asked what happens in the classroom with MTSS. How does the teacher instruct students at different levels sitting in the same the classroom and how do they customize instructional levels. Nakia responded that they have intervention blocks built in. I Ready composes groups of students, which the teacher can adjust at any time based upon what they are seeing in their classroom. The students are grouped based on their level and in some classes the students are seated according to their level because it is easier to do small groups. They have direct instruction, guided practice and independent practice. During independent practice, it is an ideal time for teachers to pull a small group. They have also utilized their Specialist teachers to pull students out for small group instruction.

Operations, David Rosario **Operations**

Fire Drills 2024-2025

David reported that he would like to give members a look behind the scenes and some of the moving parts that go into a fire drill. He said that there are metrics that they are required to follow and in the first 10 days of school they are mandated to conduct a fire drill. He said that there are different types of drills that must be done. The first drill has to be a real live drill and in the first 90 days they have to a different type of drill or an additional drill must be added.

He said that there are different types of drills that have to be done which include a traditional drill, a lockdown drill and a shelter in place drill. He said that they all have different meanings. For example shelter in place refers to possible police activity and a lockdown drill is more invasive and refers to an imminent threat possibly within the school. Each year they have the fire department to come out to assess at least one of the drills. David said that the drills help them to continue with their coordinated efforts. At the end they provide feedback to the teachers and building staff on areas that can be improved.

Presentation on Smoothie Program

David reported that the smoothie program is a pilot program that provides nutritious breakfast options twice per week on Tuesday and Thursday. He said that the goal is to increase the program to three days per week in September 2025. He shared a PowerPoint presentation and reviewed key areas of the initiative. The key areas included an Overview and Introduction of the Program, the Program Implementation Plan, the Equipment & Facility Upgrades and Program Expansion.

David concluded his report and opened the floor for questions. Board member Wade asked who puts the smoothie program together and who actually prepares them. David responded that the on site Food Service team prepares the smoothies fresh on site and serves them on Tuesday's and Thursday's.

Dr. Baynard asked if Harambee could afford to produce the smoothies once the grant has ended. Greg said that they have noticed that on Tuesday's and Thursday's when they serve the smoothies, their meal count has increased. He said that the meals that they serve are reimbursable, so the more meals they serve the more reimbursement they receive and that would be the impetus to sustaining the program.

Michelle also added that over the years their food service operation has operated with a net income that has averaged about 75,000 per year. They don't feel that they need to make money on this initiative; they would like to just break even. They have also increased in revenue over the years because of the quality of the food and feedback from the students. She said that the better they get at doing this, and the more participation that they have, the more revenue they will have to sustain it.

Dr. Baynard said that he wonders if the families that they serve even know that they place such an emphasis on the quality of food that they serve. Greg responded that the information and all of their menus are online and posted throughout all of their various communication outlets. He said that parents pay close attention to the menus and will call the main office if they were expecting their child to receive a certain meal that was posted, but Harambee was unable to get it in to serve on that day. He said that they have also noticed that bagged lunches have decreased significantly. Greg turned the meeting to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Dr. Archer
Compliance
Child Find 12/1

Dr. Archer reported that she only has two things on her agenda for this evening. She said that the first is regarding compliance and the Child Find report, which is due on December 1st. She stated that they are well on their way and as they get closer to the date she would be able to provide an accurate picture of where they are with their special education population and programing at Harambee.

Harrisburg Student Trip

Dr. Archer reported that they have a guest speaker this evening, Goldie Barnes a school counselor who will report on an event that Harambee students attended. Dr. Archer introduced Goldie and shared her screen for Goldie to begin the presentation. Goldie narrated as she walked members through a slide show of the recent trip that she facilitated for their Middle School students (Ogani, Akan, Moores and Watoto). The event took place at the State Capitol on the house floor in Harrisburg. She entitled the event HISTCS Goes to Harrisburg for a Personalized Tour. She reported that they were welcomed with opened arms by the Speaker of the House JoAnna McClinton, State Representative Morgan Cephas, and Senator Anthony Hardy Williams.

Goldie said that they had signs posted all over for the students and staff welcoming them. She explained where they were in each of the pictures and shared that they were actually on the house floor during the house meeting. She said that it was great opportunity for the students to sit in on the meeting conducted by the house speaker and to see how government works on the state level. She said that the students had lunch with members of the Black Caucus and were able to ask questions and receive words of encouragement from the members. Goldie said that one of the highlights for one of her female students was getting to meet Ms. Philadelphia 2024 who was visiting on that same day. They were unaware that she would be there, so it was a great honor and surprise for students to meet her.

She said that overall the trip was a great success and such an honor. They were able to tour many of the offices, go to the podium and meet south Philly native, Chairman Jordan Harris. They asked him lots of questions about budgets, salaries and what he is doing about educational funding. Goldie said that the trip resulted in some of the students actually being interested in politics. Deleah concluded the report and opened the floor to questions regarding Specialized Services and the student trip to Harrisburg. Board member Wade said that he did not have a question only a comment. He commented that Harambee students are receiving a wealth of knowledge between visiting Representatives in Harrisburg and the HBCU tour. He said that it is really commendable. Dr. Archer publicly thanked Goldie and the counseling team for all of their efforts and always being there to support the students and for doing a fantastic job.

Business and Finance, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that the Finance Committee met this month on October 28th. She said that she would review a couple of things that were discussed. She informed members that they had an ESSER monitoring where representatives from the state came out and spent 3 days on site reviewing their records for the ESSER projects. She said that overall the monitoring went well. There was an area of feedback that they received and need follow-up on. The area where they had feedback was their curriculum material that they bought under the project.

She said that typically they don't do bidding for their curriculum material, but if they do not they must provide a source statement indicating why they chose a particular vendor. They have been given 2 months to upload that information to the portal and she expects that it will be covered 100%. She said that they are also in the process of their general audit as well. The ESSER audit fell right in the middle of their regular audit and took a lot of time so they are behind in meeting their internal deadlines but they do expect to meet their 12/31 deadline. Michelle said that another project that they discussed during the committee meeting was the construction project under ESSER. They will have ICS Management Company present a closeout presentation to the team and the Board.

Michelle reported that another area that they talked about during the Finance Committee meeting was reviewing the overall procurement process. They want to review the policies and procedures to be sure that they are vetting their vendors and going through the bidding and quote process to be sure that they are going through the approvals internally and also presenting them to the Board for approval. Michelle informed members that they are also scheduled for their annual Bond Holders call on December 4th at 11:30 a.m. During the call they will discuss their program successes throughout the last year along with their financial highlights over the past year. She said that the call is recorded and posted for public record.

Michelle said that they are working on developing an electronic process for their purchase request. She said that since October, 98% of their purchase request orders have been through the electronic process and they expect that 100% of the processes will be electronic by the end of this current year. They are also working on an electronic system for processing payments as well.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that they had 12 initial screenings of candidates for employment at Harambee in September. They had 6 interviews, 3 new hires and 3 exits. They reported 1 workers compensation claim and held certification plan meetings with their non-certified staff. They have upcoming evidence based meetings scheduled with CEO as part of their certification plan meetings.

Michelle said that they also hold late, absent and tardiness meetings with staff. She said that they have policies around tardiness and absences. Any violation of the policies, they review and report on a monthly basis. They meet with the employee to get a sense of the issues and how they can support. She said they use a progressive discipline process that they review each month. In addition, Michelle indicated that they participated in a Job Fair at Temple University and they have a number of candidates that signed up through a QR code. She said that over the next couple of months they want to participate in Job Fairs and conduct outreach to Universities. They are also reviewing files to be sure that clearances are updated and contacting staff to ensure that their files are

complete. Michelle said that they have been working on a dashboard for HR, Business and Finance. She hopes that by January she will have dashboard reports for the Board that will give them an opportunity to provide feedback on the type of information members would like to see from those departments on a monthly basis. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor for questions. There were no questions and Greg turned the meeting back to Dr. Baynard.

Old Business

Dr. Baynard said that the only outstanding item was that they did agree to poll members around an in person Board meeting before the end of this calendar year. He said that based on the results of the poll they will have an in person meeting on November 20th. The in person meeting will be held at Harambee at 6:30 p.m. with out an option for ZOOM.

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for final questions or comments.

Board member Blue commented that she would miss everyone, but she would be unable to make it to Philly on November 20th.

Board member Wade asked for the student count. Greg said at last count they were at 566 students.

Dr. Baynard said that last year there were some hard cases pulling their absentee numbers in the wrong direction and he asked David is that still the case. David responded that there is always the bell curve in every school so they do have their share, but they are aware of their heavy hitters. He said that he and Greg meet every week and are very intense in driving interventions for attendance. He said that they are ahead of last years pace.

New Business

None

Action Items

None

Public Concerns

None

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

Approval: 9 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 0

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 20, 2024

