

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

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## Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday April 30<sup>th</sup> 2025

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:34 p.m.

### **Open Session**

#### **Board Members Present:**

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

#### **Board Members Absent:**

Heloise Jettison

#### **Others Present:**

Gregory Shannon	CEO
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

#### **Meeting Called to Order**

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard called the meeting to order at 6:34p.m.

#### **Libation** (Board member Renee Whitby)

Libation was led by Board member and cultural leader Renee Whitby

#### **Introduction of Visitors and Others Present**

None

#### **Roll Call**

Board Chair Maurice Baynard asked 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 26<sup>th</sup> 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**

Board Chair Maurice asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Board Meeting Minutes from the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no corrections or additions. Board member Larry made a motion seconded by Board member Wade 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      **AYES:**0      **Nays:** 0      **Abstentions:** 0      **Absent:** 1

Board Chair Maurice 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**

#### **Charter Renewal Kickoff 2025**

Greg reported that they have been invited to the Charter Renewal kickoff meeting which will be attended by Dr. Baynard and the executive leadership team. The kickoff meeting generally covers general information relative to the process and any changes that have been made to the Charter Renewal metric. The meeting will take place next week and the process will move forward from there. The renewal process will begin in July 2025 and run through the spring of 2026.

#### **Charter Renewal Audit**

Greg reported that Lauren, the Education Consultant to lead Harambee in the renewal process, is currently concluding a second audit of their renewal. He said that they had a couple of deltas in the mock renewal which they have cleaned up over the course of the

past six months. According to Lauren they are in good standing relative to their organizational performance data.

### **HVAC Project Update**

Greg reported that they are in the process of finalizing the installation of their HVAC systems. He said that they have not made their final payment in lieu of getting all of their challenges corrected. They have been in contact with their attorneys in an effort to get the challenges corrected and are in the process of vetting it with their attorneys. Greg thanked Board member Wade for his leadership and expertise in the domain of their facilities programs.

### **Asynchronous Instructional Day**

Greg reported that on May 20<sup>th</sup> 2025 Harambee will be toggling to an Asynchronous Instructional Day because of election day. He reminded members that their building serves a polling place and in the interest of student's safety they do not like to place students in the building when others are present. He added that and this information will go out to parents tomorrow.

### **School closing 2024-2025**

Greg reported that they are in the final 6 weeks of the 2024-2025 school year. He said that Nakia, Deleah and David have begun the process of reorganizing Harambee for the 2025-2026 school year. In the next six weeks they will utilize a systematic process to reorganize the building for next year. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

### **Instruction, Nakia Brown**

#### **Curriculum**

#### **End of Unit Review**

Nakia reported that they have been focusing on the end of the year unit reviews.

Nakia informed members that they had their IREADY challenge leading up to their PSSA assessments. The IREADY challenge was a culmination where students raced to see how many assessments they could complete on time, allowing more practice in both ELA and Mathematics. She said that they celebrated all of the students in the classes that met their bench mark 3 goals. Nakia also stated that on benchmark three, 95% of their classes met their goal and all of their classes in the testing grades met their goal. They celebrated both students and teachers on April 11<sup>th</sup> with awards and gift cards.

#### **Instruction**

#### **PSSA - Testing Preparations**

Nakia reported that they have been preparing for PSSA testing and the window began on April 21<sup>st</sup> and will run through May 9<sup>th</sup>. She said that they sat for the ELA exam on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and today they completed mathematics. Nakia also informed members that next week they will have their science exam beginning on April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> with makeups on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> which will conclude their assessment window. She said that they

have had a very smooth testing and assessment period and are now in the process of boxing all of the materials to send out so that they can get an early review and receive the scores back as soon as possible. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked what they are looking for from the students in terms of bench mark goals.

Nakia responded that they are looking for at least 40% of their students to be proficient in ELA. In mathematics their goal was 26% proficiency in order for them to make the continual growth that has been made up to this point.

### **Operations, David Rosario**

#### **Facilities Spring Break Cleaning**

David reported that each year during spring break, they do their annual spring break cleaning to refresh the school and prepare for PSSA's. He said that they also take that time to observe things that they need to do for summer refresh as summer is their big over haul period.

#### **Educational Law Center Update Regarding Immigration**

David reported that he attended a webinar from the Educational Law Center which was an update on Immigration status. There were no major updates on the legal side, just re affirmations on data security. He stated that they are not allowed to give social security numbers, where a child lives, information a student's natural parents, visa status or immigration status. David said that it is important for Harambee to keep abreast of and remain consistent with policies and to also be sure that the signage in the building is visible and clear for the restricted areas in the building. David concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked if David was aware of any interactions that have occurred throughout the Philadelphia School District. David responded that he doesn't have an answer for the district, but in terms of Harambee they are fine at this point.

Board member Wade asked David to keep him posted on the refresh projects and to be aware of their procurement thresholds and things over a certain dollar amount. He asked that they review the procurement processes and bring it to the Board in advance of summer. He urged that they get their timelines together to assure that they can receive the authorizations.

### **Specialized Services, Deleah Archer**

#### **PASA State Testing**

Dr. Archer reported that the PASA state testing has a different testing window than the PSSA. The testing window for PASA began on March 10<sup>th</sup> and runs through May 10<sup>th</sup>. She stated that they started before spring break and are now 100% complete with 100% participation.

### **Gifted Testing Window**

Dr. Archer reported that they will have their gifted testing screening which is nonverbal and does not require any reading or math. The test will take place during of May 12<sup>th</sup> through May 23<sup>rd</sup>. They will screen students in grades 3 through 6<sup>th</sup>. Students that reach the 95 percentile may be eligible to receive gifted support services. For those students that meet the 95% threshold, they will issue permission to evaluate and will have those students ready for a new cohort in the 2025-2026 school year.

### **Career Pathways Event May 30, 2025**

Dr. Archer reported that the Career Pathways Event is scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup> and they need participants. The counselors have been contacting previous participants from the past three years, but have not received many responses. She said that currently they only have two responses from past participants. She reiterated that the event is an opportunity for students to learn about possible careers in different fields. She encouraged members to solicit participation from their networks and informed everyone that they can use Zoom, in person or by pre-recorded video. They will begin at 8:00 am and end at 11:00am.

### **HBCU Tour**

Dr. Archer reported that they are beginning the HBCU tour process. She stated that they have finalized the applications, which will be going out soon. Students that are participating will receive an invitation before they leave school at the end of the year. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard asked Dr. Archer if she has an email with the standard language for the Career Pathways Day that members can tailor to those in their networks. Dr. Archer responded yes; she can send the invitation letter so that he can share it with members.

Board member Wade asked what the scoring metric is for the 95-percentile rate in gifted students. Dr. Archer responded that there is a score in the standardized assessment that provides them with students that are in the 100-percentile rating down to those that are in the 5% percentile rating. Students that score 125 or above on this particular assessment are in the percentile that qualifies for gifted services.

### **Business, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton**

#### **Human Resources**

##### **Health Insurance Coverage**

Michelle reported that contract talks between Cigna and the Jefferson network have been settled and the situation with employee's insurance have been resolved. They are still having conversations with their health insurance broker and looking at the benefit packages for employees to determine how to prevent the coverage problem from occurring again.

##### **Turnover**

Michelle referred to the HR report in the packets and indicated that they did have turnover between February, March and April. She reported that they had three

terminations, the Art teacher, the music teacher and their HR representative. They also had additions and added a Special Education teacher, an Art teacher and a music teacher which was a previous employee. They have two candidates in the pipeline for their HR position. Michelle also mentioned that they are in the process of winding down the year and they usually ramp up their interviewing process during this time. She reported that once the PSSA window closes, they will be conducting their contract talks with all staff members. Michelle concluded her report on HR and moved into Business and Finance.

### **Business and Finance**

Michelle reported that the Finance Committee had their meeting on Monday. She thanked Board member Larry, Board member Wade and Greg Shannon for their time in an extensive meeting reviewing the budget.

Michelle indicated that they reviewed the 990-tax return during the meeting and there were a couple of minor changes that were made and submitted back to the auditor. They have received it back and it was shared with the Board today. Michelle said that it might be short notice but they would like to present it for a vote today since the committee has already had an extensive review. She said if any questions arise after members review, she would be available to discuss them. She reminded the Board that the financial information in the 990 return has been reviewed by members before from her reporting and in the audit report. She said that it is the same information that is in the audit report and the rest is simply informational.

Michelle reported that in their Finance Committee meeting they discussed the 2025-2026 proposed budget and to date there has not been a formal announcement with the rates for the new year. She said that the budget that she has prepared is based on a 1% decrease and she will be sharing that information with the Board over the next couple of days.

Michelle said that hopefully in the next couple of weeks they will hear more information about what the per pupil rate will be. She warned that there are some minor changes to prepare for if there is a decrease in the rates and hopes that by May, they will have a presentation and a Board vote for the budget. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard commented that he would like to bracket the 990 discussions since members just received it today and might not have had the opportunity to review it yet.

Board member Larry, chair of the Finance Committee commented that they went through the 990 page by page and he and Board member Wade did recommend some minor changes to the document. He said that if any member is uncomfortable with voting they could schedule a time where members could write in and vote. He said if members are comfortable with the diligence that he and Board member Wade put into it they would prefer to get it in now rather than be close to the deadline.

Dr. Baynard commented that it sounds as if the Finance Committee has a strong recommendation that members accept it as it is. Board member Larry responded that is correct. Dr. Baynard opened the floor for a motion to accept the 990 as it has been presented.

### **Action Items**

#### **Vote on 990 tax return**

**Motion:** to approve the 990-tax return

Board member Wade made a motion to approve the 990-tax return as presented, seconded by Board member Larry. All were in favor; none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

**Approval:** 8      **AYES:**0      **Nays:** 0      **Abstentions:** 0      **Absent:** 1

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Concerns**

None

**Comments:** Board member Wade asked about an in-person Board meeting. Dr. Baynard said that he would send out a Board survey asking members which month would work best.

**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:** 8      **AYES:**0      **Nays:** 0      **Abstentions:** 0      **Absent:** 1

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> 2025**