

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

Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday February 26th 2025

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, February 26th at 6:32 p.m.

Open Session

Meeting Called to Order

Board member Jan Gillespie- Walton called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

Maurice Baynard
Larry Bell

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

Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

None

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 January 29th 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Board member Jan asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Board Meeting Minutes from the January 29th meeting. She opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no corrections or additions. Board member Wade 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: 7 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 2

Board member Jan 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

Greg reported that a 5th grade student from Harambee was selected and won as a finalist in the Mayors City Wide Oratorical competition. He said that the student is now a finalist and the competition will take place on Friday evening in the Mayors reception room at 5:30 p.m. Greg noted that there would be two voting items for this evening. The first would be on the compensatory education case and secondly the 2025-2026 School Calendar.

Mid Year Appraisals

Greg reported that they are finalizing the mid year appraisals. He has had an opportunity to review the appraisal scores of all executive leaders prior to them meeting with staff to share the information. The scores and performance of staff are all in order.

Organizational Planning and Development 2025-2026

Greg reported that they held their budget meetings last week with each of their executive leaders. He said that they met to cover planning, allocation, budgeting and staffing for the 2025-2026 school year with robust meetings in each division of the organization. They continue to plan for next year as they are entering their Charter Renewal year. He said that part of the planning prepares them in anticipation of the Charter Renewal application and process.

Fundraising and Development

Greg reported that the students are sponsoring an Art & Soul Showcase Fundraiser sponsored by the National Junior Honor Society. It is a showcase of African culture, dance and singing on Friday March 7th 2025 at 6:30 p.m. Greg urged members to participate in support of the students. He said that they are also still fundraising for the National Junior Honor Society and have asked each Executive leader and Board member to make a minimum contribution of \$200.00 towards the fund. He said that the Ruby Bridges Chapter is now in the process of accepting new applications for the new class of next year. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked Greg to elaborate on the mid year appraisal process. He asked if the instructors have the opportunity to accept or reject their mid year appraisals. Greg responded that the appraisal process is inclusive of everyone in the building and in every division. He said that they follow the Danielson framework, which looks at the teacher observation process and then the data is rolled into an appraisal document that looks at staff performance. He said yes, the staff does have an opportunity to sign to agree or not sign to disagree.

Instruction, Nakia Brown

HISTCS Similar Schools Report SY 2023-2024

Nakia reported that she would share Harambee's similar schools comparison chart as it relates to their ACE report for the 2023-2024 school year. Nakia said that she was asked at a prior Board meeting, what key factors determine similar schools. She said that similar school groups are comprised of District and Charter schools that are of the same type such as elementary schools, middle schools, K-8 and high schools. These schools serve a similar population or student base that have a percentage of students that are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities and English Language learners. Schools must fall within all three ranges to be included in a similar school group and there are 19 schools that are considered in Harambee's similar school

group. Nakia shared a comparison of their PSSA scores in the categories of English Language Arts and Mathematics. In the chart that she provided for review, she noted that Harambee ranks third in English Language Arts proficiency at 40.7 and first in Mathematics proficiency at 32.4.

Nakia stated that Harambee is fairing very well across the city of Philadelphia and that the data post pandemic is much higher than expected. She concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Jan thanked Nakia for the rigor that has gone into making it possible for Harambee to be where it is today.

Operations, David Rosario **School Calendar 2025-2026**

David reported that they have a robust calendar for the upcoming school year. He said that it is included in the Board packets for members to review. He reported that they will begin Summer Institute in mid August and will end in early June with 181days scheduled.

Immigration Regulations

David reported that he would review the areas that Philadelphia schools need to be aware of regarding the legal rights of immigrant students. He reported that he and Danielle attended an introductory Zoom meeting that provided an overview of ICE enforcement at Schools. They shared a slide presentation that David asked Danielle to narrate for Board members. Danielle reviewed Executive Actions since January 20, 2025 and pointed out the rules under PA law.

During the presentation she referred to important areas of adherence and documents that schools cannot require such as:

- Proof of citizenship or immigration status
- Social security numbers or place of birth that may indicate a student's immigration status
- Documents for determining residency or age that only people with U.S. citizenship or current immigration status can have (E.g. U.S. passport, driver's license, etc.)

Danielle also indicated in the overview that the 4th Amendment remains and a warrant is required for areas where people have a reasonable expectation of privacy. She pointed out the difference between Public and Non Public spaces and the rules governing those spaces. In Public spaces ICE has the authority to approach and question people in public spaces without a warrant, but People still have the right to remain silent and to contact an attorney. In non-public spaces, in order for immigration enforcement to search or enter a private area within a

school, the 4th Amendment requires a valid judicial warrant signed by a federal or state judge, unless staff consents to the search. If ICE agents enter a public area or gain access to a private area through a warrant or consent, they can arrest people if they have a valid administrative warrant for that person or if they have probable cause to believe that the person is removable from the United States.

Danielle also outlined Warrant distinctions and the difference between Administrative warrants and Judicial warrants. She pointed to key areas indicating where a judicial warrant is valid. She indicated that Immigration agents often serve what are known as administrative warrants, which do not have the same legal force. If a judicial warrant is valid, school staff must comply and the school should contact the parent of the child identified. She finalized the overview with a review of the Suggested School Protocols and Resources for families. Danielle and David concluded the presentation and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Renee asked if students are showing any stress knowing that their parents could possibly be affected by ICE.

Danielle said that she would not describe it as stress, but rather awareness.

Board member Wade said that Harambee has a host of policies and asked if they have been shared with the parents or disseminated throughout their population.

David responded that it has not because it is very new and they are just getting the information through to their internal sources and will now think about what the next steps will be. He said that they wanted to bring it to the Board and internally first.

Board member Wade said that it would be a good idea to provide the information for parents because they will probably place a lot of the responsibility on Harambee to prevent this kind of activity from happening so the more informed they are, the better. David turned the meeting back to Greg and he turned it to Deleah for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Deleah Archer

Dr. Archer opened her remarks by telling members that she did not have much to report this evening.

Compliance McKinney Vento Audit due 25-26 SY

Dr. Archer highlighted the McKinney Vento audit that happens every three years and informed members that they are beginning that process now for the 2025-2026 school year.

Compliance Extended School Year

Dr. Archer reported that they are in the process of getting ready to send out notices to families for the students that qualify for Extended School Year. She said that they have app 25 students that currently qualify so far and other that are still being evaluated.

Society Application begins 2/28/2025 Induction Ceremony:

Dr. Archer reported that the National Junior Honor Society applications are now open. The applications are due for their students on February 28th. They will plan to have their induction on Thursday, March 27th at 6:00 pm. She asked everyone to join them for the new students joining the Ruby Bridges Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society.

PASA Testing State Testing Window 3/10/2025 - 5/2/2025

Dr. Archer reported that they are preparing for the PASA and the state-testing window will be March 10th through May 2nd 2025.

Career Pathways Event

Dr. Archer reported that the Career Pathways Event will take place on May 30th 2025. She told those that may be interested in participating that they can do so in person, by ZOOM or by creating a pre-recorded video.

Gifted Testing

Dr. Archer reported that they will have their next round of gifted testing that will begin May 12th through May 23rd. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Wade asked how the Chicago trip went for the students. Dr. Archer said that the trip was fantastic and she will have the students prepare a presentation for the next meeting.

Business, Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton

Michelle reported that she would only have a couple of comments for this evening. She said that they are well underway with their 2025-2026-budget preparation.

Michelle said that they met with their executive leaders last week and the next steps will be to fine-tune the Budget over the next 30 days. They are also waiting in anticipation for the announcement of their funding rates. They do expect to present the budget to the Finance Committee during the March meeting and will prepare a report for the entire Board for the April meeting. The Board will have the budget for 30 days with the hopes to have a vote in May prior to the June deadline. She said that they are finalizing their 990 tax return and will be sharing it in the next meeting as well.

Human Resources

Michelle reported that in the area of HR they continue to interview for the upcoming school year. She concluded her report and opened the floor for questions.

Board member Jan asked how they are doing with staffing and have they lost any staff since the last time she reported.

Michelle said that there has been some turnover in the last 60 days. They did recently loose a teacher this week and one as well last month.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

Action Items

- **Vote on Comp Ed Case**
- **Vote on 2025-2026 School Calendar**

Motion: to approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar

Board member Wade made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar seconded by Board member Renee. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

Approval: 7 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 2

Motion: to approve the Comp Ed Case

Board member Wade made a motion to approve the confidential Comp Ed Case seconded by Board member Renee. All were in favor, none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

Approval: 7 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 2

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: 7 **AYE:** 0 **Nays:** 0 **Abstentions:** 0 **Absent:** 2

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 26, 2025