

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

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## Board Meeting Minutes Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup> 2025

The meeting of the Board of Trustees Public Meeting was held on Wednesday December 17<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 6:37 p.m. This was not an official meeting as there was not an established quorum of five members as defined in the bylaws.

### **Open Session**

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

Jan Gillespie- Walton  
C. Wade Mosely  
Charis Jackson  
Donna Holmes Lockett  
Maurice Baynard (joined the meeting at 7:23)

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

Heloise Jettison  
Shawn Blue  
Renee Whitby  
Larry Bell

#### **Others Present:**

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Daniel Bryant	Compliance Officer
Nakia Brown	Chief Academic Officer
David Rosario	Chief of Operations and Administration
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Dr. Valerie Howard- Richardson prospective Board member in waiting room

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

Board member Jan called the unofficial meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. and titled the meeting a gathering while waiting for additional Board members to join

#### **Libation**

Nakia Brown- Chief Academic Officer led the pouring of libation

#### **Roll Call**

Board member Jan asked members and the senior leadership team to give introductions. Board members and the senior leadership team introduced themselves, stated their names and titles.

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

Dr. Valerie Howard- Richardson prospective Board member in waiting room

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

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

Greg informed members that Michelle would present first as she has another obligation this evening. Michelle thanked members for allowing her to go first because she has another engagement this evening. She indicated that her comments would be brief and her first would be related to the audit.

Michelle reported that Greg had mentioned at the last board meeting that there was an announcement from the Office of Budget and Management that there was an extension on the federal portion of the audit called single audit, so all of the organizations that were required to file a single audit received notification, indicating that because of the federal government shutdown, there were some delays in that department and they were offering organizations an extension to file the single audit portion of the audit report. Subsequently, Harambee received notification from the Charter School Office allowing schools to submit information on where they were in the audit process and other general information giving them options based on where they were in process. She said that they chose the option of splitting their report with the regular audit report and submitting that portion by December 31<sup>st</sup> in draft form and their Single Audit Report, the federal portion, submitting that by January 31<sup>st</sup>. She said that they selected that option because they are in the renewal process and at this point one of the final portions

of the renewal process is that they are waiting for the financials in order to complete that portion of the metrics.

Michelle mentioned that Board member Wade asked a question in the finance committee meeting about documentation regarding their selection and at the time they did not have any communication from the Charter School Office solidifying their choice, but as of yesterday, they did send communication solidifying the choice that they made. Also, the final date is sometime in February but their goal will be to have the single audit portion, by January 31<sup>st</sup>. She said that they are finalizing it this week and there is no vote required to submit it since it is considered in draft form. They propose that once the draft report is done, they would submit it to the finance committee for review before they submit it to the Charter School Office. She said that by that point they should have both portions done and once the full report is done, they will then vote on it and resubmit it as a full report. Michelle paused to ask members if there were any questions.

Board member Wade made a comment that he would be offline from Sunday to Friday of next week, but Michelle could still send it, but he would be unable to review it.

Michelle responded that she would probably reach out to the finance team to see if they could pin a date to touch base before 12/31.

### **Human Resources**

Michelle indicated that she had one last brief comment regarding the HR report. She reminded members that the report was included in the Board packets and includes their additions and terminations. Over the past 30 days they had 3 additions. Two are positions that they are calling interventionists. They have paraprofessionals that are in the lower grades and in sixth, seventh and eighth grade, they have designated interventionist positions that will be working with small groups and will be filling in for staff members when they're out.

One other position is their occupational therapist who came through an agency and is actually a contracted position. She said that their previous OT person left so they brought on another person for OT. She indicated that there is also a certification status report included in the packet as well. It shows their certified staff members and their non-certified staff members. She said that they have eight non-certified teachers, all of which are in the certification process. She stated that they meet with them quarterly to determine where they are in the certification process and to offer resources that support the person. She said they conduct quarterly tracking. Michelle concluded her report and turned the meeting back to Greg.

### **CEO Report, Greg Shannon**

#### **Charter Renewal Update**

Greg reported that they are in the engagement portion of the Charter Renewal Amendment application. He said that engagement involves the Board which they have already facilitated in November of 2025. He reported that they are now moving on and

indicated that on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> they engaged the parents in a parent meeting around the proposition of attaining additional property.

### **Staff Engagement and Community Stakeholder Engagement**

Greg reported that on Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup> they will engage with staff around the proposition of acquiring additional property. And, as the new year approaches for 2026, they will begin with the community stakeholder engagement in the Eastwick community with the community-based organizations and local elected officials in the Eastwick community. Greg said that they are moving along with their Charter Renewal and their Charter Renewal Amendment applications and the process will continue in January. As they continue to engage their stakeholders, they will update Board members accordingly. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Charis asked what was the feedback like from parents on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

Greg responded that the feedback was overwhelming and the parents were in favor of the acquisition of additional property. He said that they cast the net even wider and pushed the survey out on Class Dojo. He said that they will have the official data and information to share as part of the January Board meeting.

Board member Charis also asked if they offer shadow days and or open houses where families may come in and or potential students could come in and spend the day with you all?

Greg responded that they do offer their enrollment process. Families that apply for enrollment for the lottery process are invited to an open house for which they give them a tour around the building and give them specifics about the programs and protocols. He said that in the past they have had families that asked for an individual tour of the organization and a tour of the school during normal operating hours. He said that they have certainly obliged and facilitated those tours as well.

Board member Charis asked Greg what he thought about offering shadow days, just to invite more families in so students can get a feel for the school. She said that having a potential student knowing that there is lottery and they may not get chosen might boost their enthusiasm to wanting to apply if they spent even a half a day at Harambee. Greg said that it would be a good idea and thanked Board member Charis.

Board member Wade asked, is there an upset date with regards to our good faith intention with the building owners?

Greg responded that he is not sure what you mean when you say an upset date.

Board member Wade said we had to commit, I think, with dollars or executing a document with the buildings that we were looking at. Is there a date certain?

Greg said in that regard, they have liaised with their council and drawn up an official offer which went over to the sellers and they are waiting for their response from the agents and brokers relative to the official offer.

Board member Wade said that this is not so much an offer as it is an intent to engage, if you will.

Greg replied that he is not sure what term you're looking for, but David could jump in to add some context. David said that it is leaning more towards the letter of intent, but it is an agreement. It is an agreement of sale format with addendums attached for due diligence purposes, with the normal conditional outs if the due diligence doesn't match up to what we need. He said that they are trying to engage in that portion right now. Board member Wade replied, OK thank you.

Greg turned the meeting over to Nakia for her report on Curriculum and Instruction.

### **Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Nakia Brown** **PSSA School Summary Report**

Nakia reported that she would be sharing their school summary from spring 2025 as part of their 2024-2025 school year and their PSSA data. She shared her screen and indicated that the report provides information about their school's performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics on the Spring 2025 PSSA. It also highlights notable class performance, school comparison data and the academic growth score for all students in grades 3-8. Nakia said that during the 2025-year, science was omitted from a final score because the state did something different with science. They tested grades fifth and eighth instead of grade four and eight and then they counted it as a pilot year, so the scores do not attribute back to Harambee. Nakia said that they were trying some new things with the new still standards, so they just rolled it out as a pilot. The students took the test electronically and the data was shared back with them, but it was not counted towards them.

She said for the purpose of her presentation, she would be sharing the data for ELA and mathematics and would also be highlighting some notable performances and their comparisons for similar school groups. Nakia indicated that the first slide would be their English Language Arts scores. The data that came back indicated that 40.7% of the students scored proficient or advanced which is a slight difference from the 2023-24 school year where 40.5 of their students presented proficient or advanced and the state average is 49.9. She said that there was a trend that they noticed across the Commonwealth that the ELA scores have taken a dip. Nakia said that last year for the 2023-24 school year the state average was 53.3 which shows the gauge of where the dip is and although they only made a slight increase, they did not do what many schools and many school districts across the state did which was to decline.

Their scores did increase a little and they are already action planning around how they can continue that growth. She said what is very promising is although they are 40% proficient, 100% of their student's made growth. She said to the state's average of 75.4, every child in grades three through eight at Harambee in the area of English or

language arts made growth and that is a very big deal. She shared that they received many phone calls with people congratulating them for making it into the 100's club before she even had a chance to dig into the PVAS data, which says that what they are doing in English language arts is working. Nakia said that they will continue working their programs and teaching and learning is happening at Harambee and 100% of their students are growing. They are moving their students up in the different categories from below basic to basic, then to proficient and further to advanced. This is something that they are very proud of for the work that their staff is doing.

Nakia reported that in the area of mathematics, 36.8% of their students scored proficient or advance, which is an increase of 3.9% to be exact. The state average is 41.7% and there was a decline in the state average of mathematics so Harambees math scores continue to grow. Nakia pointed out that this too is evidence in their PVAS scores where 100% of their student's made growth in mathematics as well. She said finally that students in grades 3 through 8 including the special ed population that sat for the PSSA made growth so they are very pleased with what is happening in mathematics. They will continue to look at the data and trends to work with their staff in order to make even more growth in this area. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Jan indicated that she saw a 38.6 and a 38.3, in math right before the 100% math.

Nakia responded that they get two reports and this one comes from Future Ready and then they receive an actual report in hand so that is the slight difference that you see but the score is 36.8 and this slide comes from Future Ready which is a report out to the state.

Board member Wade asked if they do a citywide result.

Nakia said that for some reason they do not produce the school district's report anymore and it always says N.A. in the same category on the report. She said that they usually put your school, the state, and the school district, but for some reason, the report says N.A. as if they don't have the information for the school district. She said that over time, the school district's results come out, but they don't have it at this state in the game.

Nakia said that what they were able to gather is data for similar school groups. In their case it was approximately 19 school groups that they were compared to. These schools are similar schools that are comprised of district and charter schools that are the same types of schools with similar populations based on a percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disability and ELL learners. She said that that they are in similar school groups for both ELA and mathematics and it is important for them to look at it from this particular scope so that they can get an idea of what is happening in regards to the other schools in which they are being compared. She reported that Harambee is number one in mathematics out of the 19 schools. She said if you look at English language arts, they are number three with a score of 40.7. And if you look at the scores that are number one and number two there's not a big margin of percentage between those. She said that she shared this report just to give members

some context as they look at their proficiency numbers and where they are and where they are hoping to be. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade asked if it was always 19 schools because he thought that there were less. Nakia responded that it was less, but the number increased last year from 13 to 19.

Greg stated that the number of similar schools is dynamic and that it changes year over year as the demographics and populace of the school district and charter schools evolve over time.

Board member Wade asked will this year's ACE reflect those same schools? Greg said not necessarily, it depends on the demographics of the city, the populace of the city as those other schools come and go in relation to Harambee demographically.

Board member Jan was able to contact Dr. Baynard, Board Chair and he is currently in the waiting room. Board member Jan said that this will give them the numbers they need to say that they are now starting the meeting even though most of it is complete. She stated that they can begin the meeting and now with a quorum they are able to vote for prospective Board member Valerie. Board member Jan stated that although they have done everything, they are now going to state that the meeting has begun at 7:23 p.m. She said now that the meeting has started the first thing that we'd like to do is have two votes 1) to accept November's Meeting minutes and 2) to vote for Valerie Richardson as the newest Board member. Board member Jan stated again for the record that with a quorum the meeting is in session.

### **Action items**

#### **Vote:**

- Approval of November 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 Board Meeting Minutes
- Accept nomination of Dr. Valerie Richardson as the newest Board member

### **Review and approval of the November 24<sup>th</sup> 2025 Board Meeting Minutes**

Board member Jan asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the Board Meeting Minutes from the November 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. She opened the floor to Board members for comments. Board member Wade commented that there seemed to be a portion of his comments missing from the November minutes about the CM3 contract. Board Chair Maurice Baynard made a motion seconded by Board member Wade to accept the November minutes as presented and the Board Liaison would review and revise the November 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting minutes for any missing statements about the CM3 contract. All were in favor; none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the minutes as presented.

**Approval:**    AYES: 5       Nays: 0       Abstentions: 0       Absent: 4

**Vote:** Dr. Baynard made a motion seconded by Board member Jan to accept the nomination of Dr. Valerie Richardson as the newest Board member. All were in favor; none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept.

**Approval:** AYES: 5      Nays: 0      Abstentions: 0      Absent: 4

Greg turned the meeting over to David for his report on Operations.

### **Operations, David Rosario**

#### **HVAC Services**

David told members that his remarks would be specific towards their CM3 contract. He thanked the Board again for the affirmative vote of bringing this contractor in to support the maintenance of their HVAC systems. He said coincidentally, they were boots on the ground this week to begin work with them, but last week they also had a sit-down meeting with he and Terrance along with a representative from CM3, to go over the maintenance portions of what they need. He said that the gentlemen came out with boots on the ground and were doing the regularly scheduled maintenance and starting the contract in earnest. They found some belts that were changed and some filters that were changed, more like the Jiffy Lube for the roof. He said that they will be coming out with some frequency and it is a part of their job to identify if there's any repair value that may occur, and to present it to him or Greg. David said that they will also come out to see what the repair might look like if any. He said that they are also doing a BAS system, which is more like a computerized thermometer. He said that he met with Baba Terrance after the gentleman left and they are rolling full throttle ahead in time for the cold weather. David said that they have provided them with a physical technician that goes on the roof and a technician who looks at the system monitoring and remote capabilities to support them in making sure that they have proper HVAC services for staff and students.

David stated that he wanted to give this update, per the last meeting to let members know how effective their voting power supports them and that they were able to take immediate action. He concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Board member Wade said that he had a quick comment. He stated that he had spoken with Terrance and was surprised that the building automation system isn't accessible remotely where they could log into it at home. Terrence said that it wasn't a capability. Board member Wade advised that it is something that they should look into.

David responded that they have solved that problem. He said that subsequent to that conversation with Terrance they have another vendor, Andy who does their hardware and they looped him into the meeting with the other vendors. And, after discussing it with everyone they were able to get that part in motion and resolve the problem.

Greg turned the meeting back to Board member Jan for final questions and comments.

Board member Jan thanked everyone for all of their hard work and patience because it was a lot of calling different people and texting until we could get the quorum, so we appreciate that you were able to hang in there and that we did get good information. She said that they must time for an emergency meeting so that everyone on the Board is aware of what's going on. She asked if there is anyone who has any questions or statements. She also welcomed Dr. Valerie Howard Richardson to the Board and asked her if there anything that she wanted to say to the Board.

Dr. Richardson thanked members and said thank you so much for your indulgence and your time in entertaining me as a member of your Board. She said that "I am beyond excited to participate with you, to join you, and to learn more about Harambee" she said that she has been doing some research on her own, as well as talking to Board member Jan and getting information about Harambee. She said that what she has found is absolutely amazing, so she is excited about what's to come in the future. She told members that she is a total worker bee and to feel free to call on her as she continues to learn about the Board and the function of the Board. She said that she is always a phone call away and more than willing and eager to jump in and do whatever she can to participate. She further explained that she is a mental health professional for over 30 years as well as an educator, having taught with the School District of Philadelphia for over 17 years and in special education as well. She said that in addition, she is currently completing the process for transferring her license to New Jersey because she lives in New Jersey; along with becoming a Board-certified behavior analyst in New Jersey. She reiterated again that she is so excited to be a part of the BOARD and she is here to do and serve in any capacity that the Board needs her.

### **Old Business**

None

### **New Business**

None

### **Public Concerns**

None

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

**Approval:** 5      AYES:0      Nays: 0      Abstentions: 0      Absent: 4

**Next Meeting: Wednesday January 28<sup>th</sup> 2026**