

Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School

Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes January 28th, 2026

The meeting of the Board of Directors was held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday January 28th 2026.

Open Session

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard	Board Chairman
Jan Gillespie- Walton	Board Secretary
Larry Bell	Board Treasurer
Renee Whitby	Board member & Cultural Leader
C. Wade Mosely	Board member
Charis Jackson	Board member
Donna Holmes Lockett	Board member
Valerie Richardson	Board member

Board Members Absent:

Shawn Blue	Board member
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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

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

Libation

Libation was led by Renee Whitby- Board member and cultural leader

Roll Call

Board Chairman 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.

Introduction of Visitors and Others Present

Robin Holland- Audit Manager for J. Miller & Associates was introduced by Michelle Thornton, CFO.

Review and approval of the December 17th 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the December 17th 2025 Board Meeting Minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no corrections and/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: 8 AYES:0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 1

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

Greg indicated that he would like to defer the meeting to Michelle Thornton for the audit presentation. Michele began first and indicated that this would be an independent financial audit presented by Robin Holland- Audit Manager for J. Miller & Associates. She indicated that the audit is for the period July 1, 2024 to June 30 of 2025. Michelle told members that they did meet with the finance committee on Monday and had a very high-level overview with the finance committee. She said that after the presentation tonight they will have further discussion about the next steps. She turned the meeting over to Robin for the presentation. Robin indicated that she would review some key points of the audit that as Board would be of interest. She said that the first thing that she would report is that they are issuing a clean unmodified opinion. She said that the report is quite lengthy as it includes several components of the report. There are the first couple of pages which includes the auditor’s report and their opinion. She said that

there is a management discussion and analysis, several different financial statements which she would highlight and then there are some additional schedules in the back.

Robin noted that the school receives contracts that include federal funding Title I, Title II, the Child Nutrition Program and ESSER. She said that because the federal expenditures exceed \$750,000 for fiscal year 2025, the organization is subject to a single audit. She said that the single audit threshold is increasing for this fiscal year 2026 to 1 million. However, based on the level of expenses from the federal sources that the organization traditionally has, it is expected that the organization will once again be subject to a single audit. She said that a single audit is basically looking at federal programs and from those federal contracts they determine based on an analysis of risk, which federal programs they will do testing. Then from the programs that they test, they then test for compliance with respect to the federal guidelines that are related to that federal program. Robin told members that

the financial statements, the supplemental schedules, the footnotes, all belong to the organization and that its management's responsibility to ensure the accuracy of all them and to make sure that they are free from fraud. She said that she asked the Finance Committee and now she is asking BOARD members as well if anyone is aware of any fraud affecting the organization. Board chair Dr. Baynard responded that they were not prepared for that question so he is responding that they have no response.

Robin indicated that the audit is not designed to identify fraud. However, during their process of doing audit procedures, if they become aware of any fraud, then they have an obligation to report that the organization. She said that she is happy to report that she was not aware and did not, during their testing, become aware of any fraud. She said however if they detect it, they are obligated to communicate it to the organization.

Robin moved on with the presentation and indicated that a management discussion and analysis starts on page four. She said it gives a highlight of the financial statements and after the management discussion and analysis, there are several financial statements.

The first couple of financial statements are considered government-wide financial statements which are different from the general fund and food service in that the government-wide includes both current and non-current balances. She said the long-term or non-current things that will be reflected in the government-wide financial statements and that are not in the other financial statements would be the capital assets, which are long-term assets, like building equipment and any leaseholds or improvements. She said that the audit would also include the liabilities related to the pension. She provided an overview of the school's financial statements, noting a net pension liability of approximately 4.2% and a positive fund balance of 3 million, indicating the organization's fiscal health.

Robin proceeded with an overview of other long-term liabilities that are reflected in the financial statement which are bonds and are roughly 5.4 million for fiscal year 2025. It shows that the organizations net position did increase from the prior year.

Additional financial statements include the general fund which is on a governmental fund basis with total assets of 4.9 million and total liabilities of 1.9 roughly. This shows that the organization has a fund balance of 3 million, an increase from the prior year which means the organization has a positive fund balance and shows that the organization is fiscally sound and does have assets to support their liabilities as they become due. Robin indicated that the statement of revenue and expenditures shows your total revenues, which is consistent with what will be reported on a governmental wide basis.

Robin further discussed the proprietary fund, which shows that the organization has sufficient assets to cover their liabilities and net assets that are on the plus side, showing that the school has a strong financial position.

Audit Report Overview and Recommendations

Robin indicated that once the audit is approved by the Board the organization would receive a management representation letter that gets copied on letterhead and would be signed by Michelle and Greg Shannon and they would then proceed with issuing the final report. She said that the last sections in the audit are various supplemental schedules and there is a budget to actual report that compares activity with the budget.

She said that there are also some additional schedules related to the pension liability and she reiterated that she began by indicating that the school was subject to a single audit and the schedule of expenditures of federal awards lists all of the federal programs that are the contracts that have federal funding associated with them. Even though most of it comes from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, it does have federal funding. She said that these are the final reports and they basically indicate whether they identified any non-compliance with respect to the federal programs and the organizations contracts. She said that she is happy that there were no non-compliance matters that were identified and no internal control with respect to the federal programs themselves that we tested as a major program. Robin concluded her presentation and opened the floor to questions.

Robin indicated that she did have two recommendations that she had mentioned to Michelle and to the finance committee. One being that the organization, does have credit cards and just as an added control feature on the reconciliations of the credit cards, that there be some type of notation or signature or sign off just to show evidence that the transactions and the statements had been reviewed.

The second recommendation is that the organization has the general fund and also food service. All of that activity is reflected in your accounting system, which you use as QuickBooks. And, because separate financial statements are reported for those, we recommend that there be a couple of accounts added within your QuickBooks to help with that reconciliation process. There are transactions that occur in between the funds

and if you have those accounts, then that would help with the reconciliation process and when it comes to the financial statements to make sure that they're in balance.

Approval Process for Financial Report

Robin said that the final points for tonight include the management representation letter that gets copied on letterhead and the other reporting requirement is that the final report goes to the charter school office and once they receive the representative letter, they will issue the final report and send it to Michelle and she would upload it to the Charter school office. Robin mentioned one final item in addition to the annual financial report that needs to be done is the IRS Form 990, informational return that nonprofits prepare. She said that they have started working on the 990 it is generally due the 15th day of the fifth month following year-end, which would be November 15th. She said that it is typical to be in line with BOARD meetings, an extension was filed. The extension is an automatic six-month extension, but she does not anticipate they would need it to extend up to that point but it's something that is there if needed. Within the next couple of weeks, Robin will be able to provide the 990 to Michelle and she can share it with the Board to review. Dr. Baynard turned the meeting back to Michelle for final comments.

Michelle informed Board members that a copy of the report was sent to members email, but some members did not receive it. She said that she would resend it to the top of all inboxes. She said it would be ideal if they could vote today but understands that they need additional time to go through the report. She said if there are any questions, feel free to send them to her or forward them to Robin. She told members they should take the opportunity to review it and then raise any questions that they might have.

Dr. Baynard commented that a quick audit of his email accounts saw that, yes, he did receive it, but not in any of his preferred email. He will forward it to members usual preferred emails so that they can review it.

Dr. Baynard asked Michelle is there a timeline other than our next Board Meeting that she requires? Michelle emphasized the importance of reviewing the financial report and proposed a feedback deadline of February 3rd.

Dr. Baynard asked Board members if they would be comfortable with what they've read and heard this evening and so even without reviewing their own copy they would want to take a vote on approval this evening.

Michelle indicated that they had done this last where they took a contingent vote in case there were any follow-up questions or concerns. She said that they have a couple of really hard dates and one is with the charter school office who waiting on this report. She said that this is the last thing that they need to finalize their ACE report and their renewal with a deadline of February 13th. Dr. Baynard asked Board members Wade and Larry to give their opinion. Board member Wade said that his recommendation is that they move forward tonight. There's an executive summary in it initially, which speaks to their conclusion that there were no findings, no fraud and a couple of recommendations.

He said its a lot of detailed information in there, but I would think one, for the sake of time, and two, that we have a vote tonight and try and move this forward.

Larry commented that I hate to go against him, but they didn't, as a finance committee, receive it until Monday. He said we did have a meeting on Monday, but Wade hadn't even looked at it yet. I agree with what Wade is saying, but I need a day to just look at it myself being the head of the finance committee and because people will be moving based on our recommendations. Board member Larry indicated that he would only need one day to review it.

Board member Wade said that based on his level of expertise, it seemed fine to him. He was mostly concerned with the executive summary and the auditor's recommendations, which parallel his concerns during the course of the year. Dr. Baynard said that he did not see any so let's take it to a vote from the Board. If you are willing to make a motion that we accept the audit, as it has been presented, with the caveat that Board members will review it, within a certain time, and if there are questions, they can submit them either to Michelle or the auditor. Someone can make that motion and we can take a poll.

Board member Wade made a motion that the Board approve the audit report tonight subject to any additional comments within the next two days and that this approval is contingent upon not having any objections within that time frame. Dr. Baynard said that those two days constitute work days which includes Monday and not Saturday.

Motion: Board member Wade made a motion to approve the audit report subject to any additional comments within the next two days between now and Friday and that the approval is contingent upon not having any objections within that time frame. Board member Renee seconded the motion. All were in favor; none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to approve the audit report as presented.

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

A motion to approve the report was made, with a provision for board members to raise any objections within two days. Dr. Baynard turned the meeting back to Michelle for final comments. Michelle made one additional comment regarding the statement of financial interest forms. She asked all members to check their email and return the form through DocuSign. Michelle turned the meeting back to Greg for his CEO report.

CEO Report, Greg Shannon

Charter Renewal Update

Greg reported that they did receive their winter ACR-R and they had things on the ACE report to address. He thanked Dr. Baynard for his leadership in the governance section of that report, which they were able to amend and correct. He said that they are in the process again of working through their amended charter renewal application.

Amended Application Parent Engagement& Staff Engagement

Greg reported that greater than 95% of their parents were in favor of their amended application and greater than 95% of staff were in favor as well.

Community Stakeholder Engagement

Greg reported that he, Danielle and David met with all of the CBO leadership in the Eastwick community two weeks ago and had a wonderful engagement meeting with them. He said that they are all in favor of them moving into the Eastwick community and the amended application is moving right along.

He said that they have a hard deadline of February 9th to submit their amended application and they are on target to submit those documents to the school district's charter school office. They are really excited about their Charter Renewal and the prospect of a new five-year term. He said that once they submit it on February 9th, they will anxiously await the decision by the School District of Philadelphia and the Board of Education on their new charter term. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard asked for one point of clarity. He asked for the dates of the new Charter term. Greg responded that the new charter term will run consecutively from July 1st of 2026 until June 30th of 2031 and that is assuming that they get a five-year renewal.

Dr. Baynard asked, assuming that we got the five-year renewal and that it is within the time window should our expansion happen by the time our next charter renewal, would we have that fully up and running? Greg said yes that is the plan.

Board member Wade asked Greg to speak a bit to the process with parent engagement, was there for example a survey monkey or was there a meeting with attendees being recorded. How were they able to evidence that all of the outreach was 100% successful?

Greg responded that they approached it in a wide casting range. He said that they held a parent meeting in person at Harambee where they did a formal presentation for the parents. In addition to the meeting there was a Google survey that was cascaded out on all of their outlets, be it in book bags, QR code in book bags and on Class Dojo and Class Dojo Story. He said that they covered all of their social media outlets and it was even done at arrival and dismissal during the general arrival and dismissal times. He said that they cast a net in six different venues in order to broadcast it as wide as possible to get the largest denominator that we could possibly find.

Board member Wade asked how were you able to quantify the responses?

Greg indicated that they were able to quantify responses through the Google survey process.

Dr. Baynard followed up on Board member Wades question about how many people responded. Greg said that he did not have the exact number but would get it to them.

He said that Danielle has been keeping that tabulation. He said that they didn't expect to get 100% and nor did they receive 100%. He said the last piece of data that he looked at; it was just north of 94.7%. Greg concluded his report and turned the meeting to Nakia for her report on Curriculum and Instruction.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Nakia Brown **Instructional Coaches Retreat**

Nakia reported that their focus has been around preparation for their summative assessment, PSSA and increasing their instructional platform. She said that they started with an instructional coach's retreat, which she thanked Greg for supporting. She said that it was an opportunity for all of the instructional coaches that worked directly with her to get some detailed training on their coaching model; which is a student blended, student-centered coaching model, where they use their instructional data to inform instruction.

PSSA Training & Teacher Professional Development

Nakia reported that they took the information from the training and rolled it out in an in-house professional development with their staff, particularly those in the testing grades. Nakia said that they have rolled out some new initiatives around preparing for the new modality of assessment, which is the new online PSSA. They gave information and insight on how they are going to prepare students for that and created an action plan on how they are going to do it ongoingly between now until April. Nakia said that it was received very well by both the coaches and the teachers. There is now evidence of implementation in their lesson plans, assessment plans, and day-to-day lessons. She said that she is very pleased with the work and it is an ongoing process.

Announced Formal Observations

Nakia reported the one thing that is taking up most of their time this season is their formal observations. She said that she is currently in the timeframe of announced formal observations. She will be doing the observations from January 6th through February 13th. She said that she has a closeout date to complete them by February 13th and then all of the teachers will receive their pre-conference and a post-conference observation.

Nakia reported that the last thing that they are focusing on is preparation for their summative assessment and they will be sitting for their firefly assessments which are a predictor given by the Department of Education to help predict how the students will do on the new online portal of PSSA. She noted that this will be their first time taking it for the whole school in ELA and math. She said that will begin February 9th and February 17th as long as they don't have any technology issues. Nakia said that she is looking forward to all of these things as they continue to move the instructional program forward. Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard asked is there any historical precedent for the effect of moving PSSA from written to digital or any standardized exam and what the loss of proficiency is just because of the modality?

Nakia responded that this is the first time in the state of Pennsylvania that it has been mandated so there is no historical precedent. Anecdotally, talking to schools that tried it last year, there was a decline. She said if you look at the state averages across the Board, there was a decline. She stated that ELA declined from 53% to 49% statewide and some attribute that to schools starting the online assessment. Greg turned the meeting over to David for his report on Operations.

Operations, David Rosario

Extended Day Extended year

David reported that Mayor Parker had an initiative that started out with 10 schools in the district and this year a second iteration of her program she has expanded it out for 10 district schools and now 10 charter schools. Harambee is in the inaugural 10 charter schools in the second year of that initiative. He said that Harambee is a bona fide partner and they had a launch. David noted that one of Greg Shannon's initiatives through HASA is agriculture. They asked for an agricultural partner and they have secured a partner which is Methodist Home. They are connecting with Methodist Home and their after-school initiative is to create a classroom space which will be the soft launch and will ultimately end in an additional agricultural space to teach students the finer points of agriculture.

Philly Fresh Produce Soft Launch

David reported that the partnership is going well and by partnering another opportunity came about through with the Philly Fresh Produce. He said that it is an initiative to get free produce to partner with the community. They have identified that they will receive enough food for 25 to 30 families once a month that they can partner with the community through volunteerism to give away. David said that Nakia and her team have stepped in to become a partner through the food pantry. This will help to get the food to the community because there is a blot of food insecurity where the school is located. David indicated that those are the two new initiatives. David concluded his report and opened the floor to questions.

Dr. Baynard asked David if they have any relationships with the Black Farmers Co-op in Philadelphia? David said not directly but I am aware of them.

Dr. Baynard offered if they are open to it, he would make the introduction. He said that they would be super interested in young people who are focusing on agriculture and they might be able to provide them with field trips.

Dr. Baynard also asked how they are doing with absenteeism?

David responded that they are doing well and are 94% overall with their average daily attendance. He said that year over year from the 2022 school year to current they have shown a 4% change to the positive in attendance. Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Dr. Archer

HBCU 2025

Dr. Archer reported that she would be sharing the presentation from the HBCU tour that occurred in October. Deleah told members that they had planned to have students here for the presentation but due to inclement weather they would not be in attendance. She proceeded with sharing her screen and spoke about the colleges that they attended and the activities that the students participated in.

Deleah noted that the planning team included Mama Danie, Mama Goldie and Dr. Archer. The chaperones were Baba Doug, Baba Rose, Mama Danie and Mama Goldie. She said that over the years they have taken over 100 students and have focused the tours on 7th and 8th graders. They have raised over 50,000 dollars and have ventured from Pennsylvania to Florida and have traveled over 6,000 miles in all. Prior to the trip the students created a fundraiser calendar which included a movie night, student and parent participation in order to raise money. They received donations from Lincoln University and from Board members to support the venture. Deleah shared pictures from movie night and other activities that the students participated in to help raise funds for the trip as well.

Deleah walked members through Day 1- 6 of the tour and highlighted the colleges that they visited. She reported that this year they went to Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee and Alabama. She said that they were able to reduce cost this time by utilizing the college campus cafeterias for lunch and/or dinner. She said that the timing of the trip did not align with any of the homecoming games, but it did align with two of the colleges that participated in the magic city football classic. The students were able to visit both colleges Alabama A&M and Alabama State University and were able to see them play in the magic city football game.

Deleah reported that they attended Morgan State on day 1 and were able to see the other side of Morgan that they were unable to see in their last visit because it is such an enormous campus. She said that this time they saw both the engineering building and the architectural design center of Morgan State University and were able to learn some things and actually see the students in action.

After that visit they headed to North Carolina A&T for a tour and then to Winston-Salem State where they had lunch and a tour. Their next stop was to Fisk University for lunch and a tour and to Tennessee State and dinner at Maggiano's. They proceeded to Alabama A&M for dinner and skating and then to the Magic City Classic Football Game between Alabama A&M vs. Alabama State. The group concluded their tour and prepared to return home on Sunday. Deleah mentioned that they were able to make a stop at the famous Buckee's for dinner, a location on her bucket which made everyone happy to visit the famous site.

Dr. Baynard asked does this early exposure end up in HBCU matriculation?

Dr. Archer said that she and David plan to write a follow up research paper on the students that started and are now in high school. She said that they will be able to provide an answer to that question by next year because those students will be seniors.

Greg took the opportunity while on the subject of student's exposure and travel to introduce an upcoming plan that is schedule in the spring for students. Nakia indicated that they are planning to take students in 5th and 6th grades on a freedom ride north along some of the key benchmarks of the underground railroad up to Buffalo. She said that they will begin the journey at the Harriet Tubman house and they will have a guide that takes them to all of the key landmarks and safe houses. The students will be journaling, taking pictures and reflecting during the entire experience.

Dr. Archer concluded her presentation on the tour and moved to the next topics for Specialized Services.

PASA/PSSA Certification completed

Deleah reported that they have completed the PASA/PSSA certification training.

PASA Testing Dates 3/9/26-5/1/2026

Deleah reported that PASA testing dates begin March 9th through May 1, 2026.

Extended School Year

Deleah reported that ESY will occur June 23rd to July 16th a four-week program.

Career Pathways Event 5/29/2026

Deleah reported that they will have their 4th annual Career Pathways Event on May 29th. Please let her know if you have any individuals that would like to share and present on their unique careers.

Gifted Students

Deleah reported that they did testing last year for gifted students and from the testing they identified 2 gifted students. She said that 12 students completed the screening and of the 12 there were 2 that qualified. Their total is now 3 students that qualify for gifted education. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor to questions.

Greg indicated that he would have 2 announcements before concluding the meeting.

- 1) In February David and his team are working third on the 2026-2027 school calendar and will have it ready for a vote in February.
- 2) They have identified the week of June 22nd with a backup week of July 13th for the Leadership Retreat. The focus of the retreat will be to develop a new 5-year strategic plan going onto the new 5-year charter term.

Greg turned the meeting over to Dr. Baynard for final comments.

Dr. Baynard announced to Board members that traditionally they hold a mini retreat at the end of January to do some planning for the remainder of the year and for the year to come. He said that he will send a survey out to members to determine the best time to hold a professional development mini retreat between now and March possibly on a Saturday morning. He said that they will focus on the latest feedback that has been

received from the Charter School office regarding Board Structure, Board compliance and the updated bylaws which have already been ratified. He said that he will get a memo out to determine time and availability.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Concerns

None

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

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 25th 2026