Harambee Institute of Science and Technology Charter School
Board of Trustees Public Meeting Minutes

Board Meeting Minutes
June 24th 2026
DRAFT

The meeting of the Board of Directors was held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday June 24th 2026 at 6:32 P.M.

Open Session

Board Members Present:

Maurice Baynard	Board Chairman
Donna Holmes Lockett	Board member
Jan Gillespie- Walton	Board Secretary
Larry Bell	Board Treasurer
Charis Jackson	Board member
Brittany Wright	Parent Board member

Board Members Absent:

Shawn Blue	Board member
Renee Whitby	Board member & Cultural Leader
C. Wade Mosely	Board member
Brittany Wright	Parent Board member

Others Present:

Gregory Shannon	CEO
Daniel Bryant	Compliance Officer
Nakia Brown	Chief Academic Officer
Deleah Archer	Chief of Student Support & Innovation
Michelle Thornton	CFO
Jenita Lunsford	Board Liaison

Meeting Called to Order

Board Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Libation

Libation was led by Nakia Brown Chief Academic Officer

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

None

Review and approval of the May 27th 2026 Board Meeting Minutes

Board Chairman Maurice Baynard asked if there were any corrections and/or additions to the May 27th 2026 Board Meeting Minutes. He opened the floor to Board members for comments. There were no corrections and/or additions. Board member Larry made a motion seconded by Board member Charis 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: 6 AYES:0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

The Board chairman indicated that he would like the meeting to proceed with everyone being aware that time management would be important this evening in order to accomplish attendance and votes while a quorum is present. He mentioned that the meeting would proceed out of order so that voting and other items on the agenda could be achieved. Greg said that there would be two resolutions for a vote.

1) Settlement with Falasca the company that installed the HVAC system
2) A pending settlement / Education Trust for a student

Dr. Baynard asked Greg to say a little bit more about the HVAC settlement because he remembered talking about it but wasn't sure that the document made it into the Board notes. Greg said that they might recall two years ago they had a new HVAC system installed, the company who installed the equipment is Falasca and there were some challenges with the installation, as the heating and air conditioning both were inoperable. They had several communications back and forth with Falasca led by Baba Rose, Baba Terrance, and Baba Wade (from a board perspective) and they withheld the final payment until the work was completed properly and to their satisfaction. As part of that process, they had to hire an independent third party to make some corrections to the installation and as an administrative team, along with the support of the governing body, made an organizational decision to withhold Falasca's final payment. This was approximately 53-55,000. Harambee decided to take it to their general counsel, who for the past few months has been in negotiation with Falasca and their attorneys, and they have all come up with a settlement amount of $40,000. They are petitioning the board to take a vote for them to settle the final payment with Falasca which has been negotiated through the attorneys at $40,000.

Dr. Baynard asked Board member Larry, Board Treasurer if the committee had an opportunity to look at the issue? Board member Larry said yes, they did and they agree with the settlement.

Dr. Baynard opened the floor to a motion to accept the agreed upon payment to Falasca at 40,000 dollars as a summary settlement for the work that was done.

Vote: Finalize and sign the settlement agreement with Falasca for the work performed to the HVAC system, arranging payment of the agreed $40,000 dollars final settlement amount in accordance with the board's approval.

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion, seconded by Board member Donna, all were in favor; none were opposed and there was a unanimous motion to accept the agreed upon payment of $40,000.00 as final payment to Falasca.

Approval 6 AYES: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

Dr. Baynard turned the floor back to the Leadership team for an explanation on the next vote on a pending settlement Education Trust for a student. Dr. Archer explained that the student is currently a first grader who came to Harambee last year in kindergarten and they provided services for the youth, but the parent was not satisfied with the level of support, so they were able to work with their attorney to reduce the amount of the settlement. Dr. Archer said that the settlement is very minimal and it also does not have a trust, which means that the funds would stay with Harambee. She said that compensatory education services are reimbursable services, so families have to provide documentation to utilize the funds as they are required, just for educational support.

Dr. Baynard asked if anyone had questions about the settlement. Board member Larry asked if the student would be remaining at Harambee? Dr. Archer responded yes.

Dr. Baynard opened the floor for a motion to accept the settlement as presented

Vote: A pending settlement for Third Party Education Trust for the Benefit of a student

Motion: Board member Larry made a motion to accept the settlement as negotiated, seconded by Board member Jan. All were in favor; none were opposed and it was passed unanimously.

Approval 6 AYES: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

Dr. Baynard informed members of the passing of Dr. Valerie Richards and asked that members and others present take a moment to reflect on the fact that we lost a board member in the 30 days between this month and last month. He turned to Board member Jan since she was the person that introduced Dr. Richardson to the Board to share a short reflection about her and then asked if everyone would take a moment of silence.

Jan spoke to everyone indicating that there was very little that she's been able to say without being tearful, but Valerie loved what she was doing. She loved her work, and she loved young people. She said that she loved our children from a very early age on up to college level. She spent a lot of time going out to Cheney and working with young people. She was a good person, a caring person, and was excited about being a part of Harambee's board. She had so many questions and so many things that she wanted to do and Jan was happy that she got a chance to meet members and be a part of the Board. Dr. Baynard shared information about her services for anyone wishing to attend.

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

<u>CEO Report, Greg Shannon</u>

Greg indicated that he would be presenting the CEO's portion of the board report and would also present for David Rosario who had an emergency and would not be present this evening.

Charter Renewal Agreement Document

Greg reported that they received a new five-year charter agreement from the School District of Philadelphia. There was a June 18th or 19th deadline to sign that agreement. He said that they applied for an extension and did not sign the agreement at the moment, as it did not include their request for property acquisition, so they filed for an extension on the signing of the agreement, while waiting on the School District of Philadelphia's decision on their request for property acquisition. He said that it is their hope that they will get information from the school district soon and will be able to sign the agreement in the upcoming month or so

Leadership Retreat

Greg reported that the leadership retreat is set for July 13th through 17th and they will be, as mentioned in previous meetings, working on a new five-year plan, which will take them through the new charter term, charting their course towards success. He said that the plan will include information in domains from the CEO's office, the Chief academic officer's office, the Chief of operations office, the Chief of specialized services office and the Chief financial officer.

Greg also reported that he and the leadership team will meet with the board during the morning of July, 21st to get input from the board relative to their new strategic plan and then following that, they will meet with the school's leadership team, the faculty, staff, students, and parents, so that they have a 360 transparent vetting of the plan and input from all stakeholders relative to the plan.

He said that they are really excited about the direction of Harambee in the next five-year charter term and they all know that without a comprehensive plan to chart their course towards success, they cannot be successful. He said that everyone’s opinion is valued and respected, and everyone's opinion will be taken into account as they develop their new strategic plan. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions and comments.

Dr. Baynard said that he had a comment about the five-year plan. He said that he was wondering about two things: 1) He was wondering about planning a midway checkpoint where they hold themselves to task and check on how they are doing.

And, 2) the other thing that they talked about at the last strategic planning meeting was a board challenge to become the only green dot in a sea of red dots. He said that parents just did not have a choice whether they sent their children to a local public school, to any charter or any parochial school they were going to get the same level of education, and Harambees goal was to differentiate themselves from that, so he would encourage everyone to differentiate and let the rest of the city know that they are a green dot in a sea of mediocrity.

Greg responded to the comment saying that Dr. Baynard is absolutely right. He said that there are several things:

To begin, he told members that he pulls out the previous strategic plan annually and reviews it. Nakia (the academic officer) is constantly looking at the plan as they continue to evaluate their instructional data and how they may change course going forward in order to continue to deliver a more quality instructional program.

He said that they have moved the organization to good, and now in this next iteration of five years, how do they move from good to great. He said if they continue to do what they have been doing, they will reach what is known as a tipping point, and then go back to diminishing returns. He emphasized the need to continue to push the envelope and be innovative, be cutting edge in terms of the instructional, social, emotional and life skills strategies and services that they provide to the community and to the children to continue to grow the organization.

Greg said that another thing which is critically important in his section of the strategic plan will include a media plan. He said that they have worked so hard and had their heads down grinding so hard to get the work done that they have neglected to tell the story. He said that part of his section of the strategic plan will be to create a media campaign and plan, to share this great story with the broader community. Greg concluded his report and opened the floor to questions and comments. He turned the floor to Nakia for her report on Instruction.

<u>Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Nakia Brown</u>

School Close Out Inventory

Nakia reported that her report would be short as they are continuing to prepare for the end of year closeout. She said that she is working with Michelle and the team ordering materials for the 2026-2027 School Year. She said that there is an electronic process that has to be completed of taking inventory of all of the books that they have.

Professional Development

Nakia reported that they are in the process of developing their professional development calendar for Instruction. They are looking at what makes them different in the next iteration of Harambee. They are discussing the next 5 years and ways in which they can increase their support of teachers through coaching and professional development. They want to provide targeted instruction to the teachers to improve their performance and have used an end of year survey to gather that information. Nakia said that all of the teachers and para professionals left this summer with their assignments so that they know exactly what to expect in the next school year.
Nakia concluded her report and opened the floor to questions and comments.

<u>Operations, David Rosario (</u>Greg will be reporting on behalf of David Rosario)

Class Schedule/ Rostering 180-day rollover 2026-2027 SY
Greg reported that the180 day school calendar and schedule has rolled over in Infinite Campus. Infinite campus is now set up for the 2026-2027 school year and the class schedule has been distributed to all staff. He said that when they developed the class schedule and roster, they made it cross functional. He informed members that there is a committee of staff that all work together to provide input to the schedule and roster. He said that it is very helpful to have all of the teams to review it from every lens and every discipline. Once it has been reviewed from every aspect, it goes to the administrators for a final review and sign off. Greg concluded the report on behalf of David and opened the floor for questions and comments.
Greg turned the floor to Dr. Archer for her report on Specialized Services.

Specialized Services, Dr. Archer
Dr. Archer reported that the only item on her agenda would be the settlement agreement which was voted on earlier in the meeting this evening.

Dr. Archer also mentioned the employee evaluations which were all completed as a team and submitted to Greg for review. She said that all of their teachers have received their assignments and rosters and are ready for the new school year. Dr. Archer indicated that they had a great school year with an abundance of activities. She said that they are now in full swing with the ESY program as federal regulations require them to provide summer learning to students with IEP's. She said that the program began on June 23rd 2026. Dr. Archer concluded her report and opened the floor to questions and comments.
Greg turned the floor to Michelle for her report on Business, Finance and HR.

Business Finance and HR, Michelle Thornton
Michelle reported the highlights of her department over the past 30 days. She said that after PSSA testing, they went into full closing of the school year. She said that Greg and executive leaders met with staff members from their respective departments individually to welcome them back and there were three staff members that were not asked to return. Along with meeting with staff all of the executive leaders completed mid-year and end of year evaluations finalizing that information and submitting it into the HRIS system. In addition, they have been preparing contracts for all of the summer programs that they provide services for including ESY. She said that they have been very busy with multiple teachers and para professionals during this time because of so many programs and activities taking place in the building.

Michelle reported that they continue their recruitment efforts year-round to bring in candidates before August. She said that they have currently onboarded 2 General Education teachers, 2 Special Ed teachers, 1 counselor and 1 OT Counselor. She said that they are fully staffed going into the new school year.

Michelle reported that the last item that she is reporting on did not make it into the Board reports because they received the news late last week. She said that they received the per pupil rates for the upcoming year. She said that they always have an end of the year adjustment with the rates. They receive a tentative rate at the beginning of the year that they work with and then there is a final adjustment at the end of the year. This year they received a downward adjustment for the 2025-2026 school year which is a retroactive adjustment that they will see in July of approximately $75,000.00 dollars.

She said that they also received the announcement for the new 2026-2027 rates for General Ed that went from 14.8 to 16.5 an increase of 11% and for Special Ed from 45.3 to 49.7 an increase of 10% as well. The proposed budget was based on a 2% increase so they will put the difference in their contingency fund and make the update in their next Board report. Michelle concluded her report and opened the floor to questions and comments.

Board member Larry asked what percentage of the teachers are certified. He said that it looks like they are at 53% which doesn't sound like a good number or where they used to be.

Michelle responded that the number fluctuates and where they should be is 75% but they have never remained at 75% for even a year although it has been closer than where they are now. She said that all of their non certified teachers are on a certification trajectory and have a certification plan. If they hire a teacher that is not certified, the teacher must have at least an emergency certification and they are immediately placed on a plan which is documented and signed off by them. She said that they meet with the teachers on the plan every quarter to check their progress and to determine how they can support them and all of their executive leaders are a part of that process. Michelle turned the floor back to Greg and Dr. Baynard.

Dr. Baynard reminded Board members and the executive leadership team of the Strategic planning meeting to review the 5-year plan that is scheduled for Tuesday July 21st from 8a.m. to12 p.m. at The Pyramid Club in center city Philadelphia. He asked the Board and leadership team to be on the lookout for an email with the details. He opened the floor for further questions and comments before a motion to adjourn.

Comments:
Board member Larry thanked the Harambee family for their attendance and participation at the health fair that his fraternity hosted at Harambee on Saturday. He said that there were many different healthcare agencies that participated and they collected over 30 units of blood that will be donated. He said that they provide food and there was a lot of health information provided for the community from several agencies. He said that the staff of Harambee did a great job and they all worked together to improve the community and he appreciates all that they did.

Michelle asked Greg if they needed Board members to be on standby for any action around their Charter Renewal. Greg said yes, they would need the Board to be on standby should they receive the new Charter Renewal document inclusive of the property acquisition. He said that they would need the Board to be present prior to August 13th the School District of Philadelphia's board meeting to sign, vote and ratify the charter agreement so that they can get it on their docket for approval prior to their meeting. Greg said that they will communicate this information directly to the Board if need arises. Dr. Baynard asked all Board members to be on standby for that communication in case they are needed.

Old Business
none

New Business
none

Public Concerns

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

Approval 6 AYES: 0 Nays: 0 Abstentions: 0 Absent: 4

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 26th 2026