

**HCCPS Board of Trustees
Meeting Agenda
March 22, 2017**

Please bring your board books as we have some updates!

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School was founded in 1995 as a Massachusetts Public Charter School. Our mission is:

- ❖ To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.
- ❖ To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- ❖ To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

Facilitator: Scott Remick

6:30 Welcoming (read mission statement) (15 min)

Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements
Agenda check; Appoint timekeeper, listkeeper
Thank You Note check
BOT Visibility this month
Approve Minutes from February meeting

6:45 Public Comment period (10 min)

6:55 Education Coordinator Hiring Recommendation: Susannah/Michael (30 min – decision)

7:25 Coordinator Job Titles: Scott (10 min – decision)

7:35 By-law updates: Amy R (10 min – update)

7:45 Board book updates: Penny (5 min - update)

7:50 BOT Recruitment: Penny/Deirdre/Amy R (5 min – discussion)

7:55 BOT/FOH Gathering Update / Annual Fund: Andi (5 min – update)

8:00 Annual meeting planning: Deirdre (5 min – update)

8:05 Staff Retirement celebration planning: Deirdre (5 min – discussion)

8:10 New Business (5 min – identify only)

8:15 Committee Reports (5 min – questions only)

8:20 Meeting Wrap-up/ Evaluation/Minutes Finalization (5 min)

Confirm date/facilitator, snack bringer, newsletter blurb, agenda check for next meeting

8:25 Review Action Items in this meeting's minutes (5 min)

8:30 Adjournment

Education Hiring Coordinator Process Followed

As presented at the March 22, 2017 Board of Trustees Meeting

November

- * wrote position description
- * developed timeline for process
- * posted job internally

December

- * planned search committee initial interview questions
- * posted job externally
- * reviewed internal application
- * interviewed internal candidate

January

- * reviewed external applications
- * selected candidates for initial search committee interview
- * conducted initial search committee interviews
- * debriefed initial interviews
- * selected candidates for full-day interviews at school

February

- * solicited and coordinated teacher/staff questions
- * solicited and coordinated parent questions
- * planned and implemented full-day interviews at school with finalists

March

- * debriefed feedback from full-day interviews
- * selected candidates for BOT interviews
- * solicited and coordinated BOT questions
- * planned and implemented BOT interviews
- * debriefed BOT feedback
- * selected candidates for reference checks
- * conducted reference checks
- * debriefed all input to date
- * selected candidate to recommend to BOT
- * presented recommendation to BOT

To: HCCPS Board of Trustees

Date: March 22, 2017

From: M. Filas & S. Howe, Education Coordinator Search Committee Co-Chairs

Re: Recommendation to hire Lara Ramsey (high priority)

After a careful and in-depth process, which narrowed the field to two superlative candidates, the search committee is pleased to recommend Dr. Lara Ramsey for the position of Education Coordinator.

In all measures and at every step of our process, among each constituency, Lara was consistently well received.

Lara's background is impressive: an 18-year tenure at her current teaching position, extensive experience leading professional development for teachers; experience training and teaching teachers; experience teaching teens and administering educational programs from her experience as an outdoor educator, plus a Doctorate degree in Teaching and Learning from Harvard University, and several scholarly publications and multiple conference presentations in the last few years.

More importantly, through Lara's interview cycle at Hilltown, she has demonstrated wonderful abilities to connect with people, to listen carefully and demonstrate thoughtful interaction and communication. Her interactions with faculty left them inspired for the type of process-oriented changes she might introduce to curriculum, and she was able to discuss specifics like "anti-bias" education and other approaches that were clear to practitioners and non-practitioners alike. Her interactions with students left them impressed with her kindness but also with her clarity of boundaries, and willingness to be strict when needed—which they admired. Her interactions with parents were enthusiastic, bright and open. People commented on her intelligence and her ability to articulate in practical terms, being insightful, concise, and enthusiastic. People found her method-versus-content approach to mesh well with Hilltown. Whenever she had the chance Lara emphasized the importance of the individual student and how education can serve them as individuals.

It is difficult to capture the value of Lara's disposition, but in fact that has been a factor in her successful candidacy. She is able to bring her impressive intellect and accomplished background without coming off as highbrow, or superior. In fact, her confidence reveals itself in her readiness to acknowledge where she has a need to grow or learn—she'll need to learn to work with a board, to learn the challenges of MCAS testing, and public school administrative specifics. And her confidence also shows itself in her keen listening ability and readiness to consider other ideas. These traits inspire us to believe she will be a great fit at Hilltown.

Lara also has demonstrated an exceptional skill at communicating with a large audience—be they teachers or parents, or the board of trustees, Lara made a good impression and we recognize that her gift for public speaking would serve our institution well.

As a Hilltown parent with a 7th grader in the Prisms, Lara has been party to our culture. She is not on the job market and would be happy to continue on at the Smith College Campus School—she applied to this position because of the unique draw and culture of Hilltown and because in our

school she saw a place where she would fit well and be delighted to serve. That means she will not be teaching, but she is eager to step into the classroom and has offered ideas about how she might facilitate peer classroom observations and other interactions among faculty by being ready and eager to step in as a substitute. That is consistent with her emphasis on wanting to form relationships with every student and faculty, with wanting to know the community as individuals, and with her passion for teaching.

Lara's references affirmed our committee's findings, and allayed our concerns about her ability to learn those things where her experience is limited or missing (public education, MCAS testing, working with a board of trustees). In fact, several of her references volunteered that Lara is overqualified for her current teaching post and said they would hire her for a leadership position if they had one to fill. Others of her references, those who are current colleagues, had all good things to say, and lamented that our gain will be their loss.

We hereby put forward Lara Ramsey as strongest candidate for Education Coordinator.

Dissenting view from Ed Coordinator Hiring Committee member

March 22, 2017

I would like the board to know that I have serious concerns about the recommendation put forth by the hiring committee. Not only are we passing over a superlatively qualified internal candidate, we are doing it in favor of someone who has less experience in a number of important realms. Lara has no public school special education experience, no experience working with a board of trustees, no experience with state accountability and limited experience with standardized testing. While she has supervised student teachers, she has never been in an administrative role in a school. Every one of these things is critical to the operation of the school. Kate has experience in all of these areas and she is not just the candidate I prefer; I believe that she is the more qualified candidate. In my role on this committee as one of the representatives of Hilltown teachers, I think it's important to share that many of the K-6 and special education teachers also believe Kate to be the stronger candidate and the one they would prefer. Teachers are unique stakeholders in this hiring process not only because of our daily interactions with the education coordinator, but also because of the longevity of typical teaching careers at Hilltown. It is certainly possible that Lara could succeed in this role but I think there is an unnecessary risk involved with someone untested--and it's a risk we don't have to take. I did not feel I could maintain my integrity as part of this hiring committee unless I shared my grave reservations about this decision with the board.

**Proposal to the Board of Trustees
Domain Title Modifications**

Date: 17 March 2017

Priority Level: Medium

Approximate time needed for discussion: 10 minutes

Proposal presented by: Domain Council

Committee members drafting proposal: Scott Remick

Text of Proposal:

The titles for the each domain staff should be modified to provide clarity within the school:

Current Title	New Title
Educational Coordinator	Director of Teaching and Learning
Administrative Coordinator	Director of Administration
Community Coordinator	Director of Community and Family Engagement

Goals to be achieved by proposal:

The school has evolved over the past several years, with multiple layers being introduced, and the “coordinator” title has caused some confusion, especially with competing titles such as Technical Coordinator and Student Services Coordinator. Using the term “Director” for the each domain staff will provide some much needed clarity for parents, staff and community at large.

Potential problems/dissenting views:

Some BOT and community members may feel that there are more appropriate title for the three domain staff.



Governance and Board Sustainability Committee

HCCPS Board of Trustees By-Laws changes

March 22, 2017

The GABS committee recommends the following by-laws changes be brought to the May 2017 Annual Meeting for vote

- Article III Sec. 3
 - Currently reads- “Notice of the time, place and purpose of any annual meeting of the members shall be given in person or by mail...”
 - Proposed change- “Notice of the time, place and purpose of any annual meeting of the members shall be given in person or in writing...”

- Article IV Sec. 3C-
 - Currently reads- “Board member participation must occur in person.”
 - Proposed change- “Board member participation must occur in person or via teleconferencing when necessary as approved by the Clerk, for a quorum or a timely decision.”

- Article IX Sec. 1
 - Currently reads- “A notice by mail or telegram shall be directed to a member at his or her usual address...”
 - Proposed change- “A written notice shall be directed to a member at his or her usual address...”

- Article II Sec. 1
 - Currently reads- “Voting rights accrue to those members who have contributed four hours of work per month to be averaged over a twelve-month period.”
 - Proposed change- “Voting rights accrue to those members who have contributed forty hours of work over a twelve-month period.”

- Article II Sec. 2
 - Currently reads “All members are strongly encouraged to fulfill the minimum work requirement for voting membership, which is defined as any work authorized by the Board of Trustees done for the School that equals or surpasses four hours per month.”
 - Proposed change- cut the entire section

- Article IV Sec. 1
 - Currently reads- “Board members must serve HCCPS with duty, loyalty, and care.”
 - Proposed change- “Board members must serve HCCPS with duty, loyalty, and care, missing no more than two regularly scheduled BOT meetings in a given Fiscal Year.”

In 2017, more than ever before, the charter public school movement needs to grow its grassroots advocacy base and our schools' boards of trustees/directors are the best place to start. Our challenges on Beacon Hill are no longer about lifting the cap, but on protecting the gains we have made and building bridges with others who care about improving public education. We know that some of the legislation that has already been filed in 2017 would cut into charter school autonomies and we need a large group of thoughtful leaders to help defend against such harmful measures by connecting with the lawmakers that represent them personally as well as those representing the district where your school is situated. The list below includes a number of important advocacy activities, in ascending order. We know that many board members will not choose to go all the way to the highest level but for those who do; we will be ready to help them succeed!

- 1. Take action when the MCPSA sends an online action alert.**
 - a. School Leaders: Please send your updated board lists WITH HOME ADDRESSES to Marc Kenen (kenen@masscharterschools.org).
 - b. The MCPSA will use district matching software to identify which MA house and senate district corresponds with each board member.
 - c. The MCPSA will provide school leaders and/or designees with that information.
 - d. Board member contact information will be uploaded into the MCPSA database to ease constituent outreach when targeting specific lawmakers.

- 2. Serve as the board's advocacy point person during 2017.**
 - a. The advocacy point person will work with the MCPSA's advocacy consultant, Lori Fresina, of M+R Strategic Services, when needed, to make sure that your Board is included in the many important relationship—building opportunities.
 - b. The point person does not need to have any advocacy experience. They just need to be willing to help represent the many interests that support charter public schools in Massachusetts.

- 3. Participate in quarterly statewide conference calls to learn about proposed policy and funding changes being debated on Beacon Hill, and what we plan to do about them.**
 - a. The calls will be no longer than 30 minutes and will happen quarterly unless there is an urgent need to convene at other points.
 - b. More than one call time will be available for the quarterly calls to accommodate the busy schedules of board members.

- 4. Agree to author and submit a letter to the editor or op-ed to a newspaper at a critical juncture in the process.**
 - a. Lori and the MCPSA's communications team will help with the drafting and you can tailor and personalize the message so it reflects your perspective.

- 5. Meet with your own lawmakers to discuss the priority issues.**
 - a. Board members will be prepared with talking points, a summary of the relevant bills and budget items, and a feedback form.
 - b. Lori is happy to provide some advance coaching to prep board members for these meetings, if desired.
 - c. Lori can work with board members to arrange for lawmaker meetings either at the state house or in the district office.



Education Domain Report to the Board of Trustees

March 17, 2017

Teachers discussed ways to meet the pledge requirement at the January 31 teacher meeting. The following ideas were discussed:

- Educate as opposed to indoctrinate. Kids should know what it is.
- Maybe once/twice a year we have a part of All-School and classes explain parts
- Suggestion: kids say it at the beginning of each week. And there should always be some discussion of what it means.
- This is cultural knowledge.
- Some kids will like getting up and leading it.
- Littlest kids most at risk of indoctrination. Could link to our recent study of “liberty and justice for all.”
- Could be something we start in Oct, not Sept, so classrooms can establish their norms and have time to break down pledge first.
- Be very clear that every individual student has right to not say it, say only parts, etc.
- Once a week might work best if we want them to actually have it memorized.
- Student who wants to say the whole thing can lead it.
- It will be different once it’s been spoken over the years.
- Kids may not know what’s on the flag. What does it mean to be a country? Opportunity to talk about civics. Fits with curriculum.

Conclusion:

1. Beginning in October, all students will provided the opportunity to say the pledge once per week, time at teachers’ discretion.
2. Grade level teams will meet in August to discuss how to break this down/teach it.
3. We will communicate our plans to parents this spring. This will be a topic of discussion at May’s Annual Meeting.
4. We will start in next school year



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Domain Coordinators Report to the Board of Trustees March, 2017

1. At the beginning of April, we will be administering MCAS tests in English Language Arts to grades 3-8. This is the beginning of Next Generation MCAS, and it will be a paper based test except for grades 4 and 8 who will take a computer based test. Next year, grades 4-8 will take the computer based tests, and the following year, all grades will take the computer based tests. In May, students will take tests in Mathematics (all grades) and Science and Technology (grades 5 and 8). Results will not be available until September.
2. Our annual admission lottery was held Feb 9. Thanks to 21st century technology we were able to accomplish that task on a snow day. We had nearly 300 applicants for 31 openings. This year we had a record number of kindergarten siblings (14) which allows for a smaller pool of new families in the fall. All openings have been filled, actually in record time, though there are likely to be some changes as the spring rolls around.
3. Our K-5th grade sleepover event on Feb 17 was a great success, in fact the smoothest ever. We hosted roughly 65 students and 30 parents. The success reaffirmed our decision of last year to limit the grade range to K-5.
4. At the March 13 Professional Development Day, staff participated in a training from the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students sponsored by DESE. It was an outstanding presentation that was informative and relevant to our students, teachers, and families. Staff were also trained in our "*Self-harm & Suicidality Protocols*" by School Counselor Emilie Woodward.
5. American flags, meeting the regulatory specifications, have been installed in all the classrooms at school.
6. Dan participated in a panel discussion on Charter Schools at Mount Holyoke College this past month. Also on the panel were the mayor of Northampton and a representative from the Holyoke Charter School. It was a lively and respectful discussion about education, communities, and money.
7. A successful Science Fair and Spirit Week have worked well to engage students and boost the energy level at school during the winter.

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

14 February 2017

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick

8:30 pm – Meeting began

Location: Dan Klatz Office, HCCPS School

Proposal Process: GABS will be working on a roadmap on how proposals are brought to the board for decisions. Domain discussed this briefly, and felt that a proposal should always come from a committee or an ad-hoc sub-committee (example: Coordinator Salary Review subcommittee). At times, this can be discussed during New Business, where, as a group we could decide which committee should work on and present the proposal during the next BOT meeting.

Education Coordinator Interviews: Domain discussed the approach for scheduling the BOT interview as well as the next BOT meeting. The last parent/staff interviews will take place on March 7th, so it would need to take place after this date. Best option would be to hold an evening of interviews on March 15th and then hold the BOT the following week, March 22nd, where the hiring committee would recommend the finalist and BOT would make a final decision. Scott to post a Doodle poll to BOT members to confirm that these dates work.

Next Domain Meetings: The next domain meetings will not be held during the normal dates (every other Tuesday). The next domain meeting will be March 8th, at 8:30 where DC will continue work on the coordinator roles/tasks/succession planning. The BOT agenda will be crafted during the Thursday, March 16th meeting at 8:30.

9:30 pm – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Remick

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

8 March 2017

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick

8:30 pm – Meeting began

Location: 2nd Floor Conference Room, HCCPS School

BOT Agenda items: Domain briefly discussed a couple of agenda items. We'd like to make sure that we set aside some time to plan/discuss Amy A's retirement celebration, and asked if Amy was okay stepping out of the BOT meeting during the agenda. She agreed. The detailed BOT agenda will be crafted during the Thursday, March 16th meeting at 8:30.

Overall Management Structure: We continued the process of mapping the large list of director tasks (identified from the previous succession planning process) to specific coordinator positions. Some tasks map exclusively to one domain; others are shared across domains. One of the goals of the meeting was to designate a point person, the coordinator responsible for the task – even if the others contribute. Additionally, we were able to identify time sensitive tasks, the emergency backup staff for these tasks. The next task is to clean up the task wording to provide consistency across domains. This will be part of an overall management document that contains job description, who the individual supervises, the task list and emergency backups.

Next Domain Meeting: The BOT agenda will be crafted during the Thursday, March 16th meeting at 8:30.

9:30 pm – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Remick

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

16 March 2017

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Amy Aaron, Deirdre Arthen, Scott Remick

8:30 pm – Meeting began

Location: Dan's office, HCCPS School

BOT Agenda items: Domain discussed the following agenda items for the March 22nd. Ed Coordinator recommendation proposal (30), Job Titles for coordinators (10), GABS By-Laws (10), Board Book update (5), BOT Recruitment (5), FOH/BOT Gathering Update & Annual Fund participation (5), Pledge/Flag Update (10), Annual meeting planning (5).

Domain Titles: A proposal will be come from domain council, a need to change the “coordinator” title has arisen. The school has evolved over the past several years, with multiple layers being introduced, and this has caused confusion. The new suggested titles are: Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Administration, Director of Community and Family Engagement.

FOH/BOT Meeting Debrief: BOT and FOH had a joint gathering on Feb 28th. Individuals went around the room to discuss their fund-raising goals/aspirations. The group discussed what is needed at the school so that FOH can provide a hook into fundraising. The group discussed collaboration between the community team and the FOH.

Next Domain Meeting: The BOT agenda will be crafted during the Tuesday, March 28th meeting at 8:30.

9:30 pm – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Remick

Finance Committee Meeting March 3, 2017 8:20 am @HCCPS

Present: Amy Aaron, Dan Klatz, Deb Jacobson, Matt Dube, David Starr/Chair

Absent: Chris Greenfield, Maureen Mahar

Reviewed FY18 preliminary budget projections

Assumptions

Flat Tuition

Lunch Program, fewer kids signing up, shows lower revenue

Fundraising, lower revenue than last year's projection

Teacher Salaries increase to next step of compensation, no new positions, no new hours

Increase in Health Reimbursement account...teachers used more in the current year than last year

Depreciation total is close to total annual payment for principal for building purchase

Occupancy related adjustments

Discussed an operating budget that would include depreciation as a footnote instead of as an expense to reflect the actual cash flow impact

With Depreciation, budget shows a \$30,000 deficit

With Depreciation below the line, the budget (and cash flow) projection will be positive

Discussion of creation of a capital project budget for major physical plant replacements such as parking lot, HVAC, roof replacement

To Do

Budget Re-allocation Plan

Dan and Amy will review and make recommendations at the 3/31/17 Finance Committee Meeting

GABS Meeting Minutes: March 6th, 2017

5:00 PM

Attendees: Amy, Deirdre, and Penny

Regrets:

Long Range Plan Monitoring

Updated the Long Range Tracker with all three Coordinators.

Board and Committee Recruitment

Discussed potential candidates.

More outreach is needed.

By-laws Update Recommendations

Revised the by-laws in red font below.

Changes Due to Technology:

- Article III Sec. 3-
 - Currently reads- “Notice of the time, place and purpose of any annual meeting of the members shall be given in person or by mail...”
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Other Changes:

- Article II Sec. 1

- Currently reads- “Voting rights accrue to those members who have contributed four hours of work per month to be averaged over a twelve-month period.”
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 - Proposed change- cut the entire section

- Article IV Sec. 1 Need to propose certain number in a row or certain %age
 - Currently reads- “Board members must serve HCCPS with duty, loyalty, and care.”
 - Proposed change- “Board members must serve HCCPS with duty, loyalty, and care, missing no more than two regularly scheduled BOT meetings in a given Fiscal Year.”

Next Meeting: April 4th, 2017 (5:00 p.m. Purple’s Classroom)