

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, April 15, 2020, 6:30 pm

**Location:** By Zoom (pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law)

**Present:** Tim Reynolds, Lara Ramsey, Dan Klatz, Joe Wyman, Noelle Barrist Stern, Liz Preston, Kelly Woods, Rich Senecal, Matt Dube, Karen Sise, Paula Ingram, Dawn Reesman

**Regrets:** Deirdre Arthen

**Facilitator:** Tim

**Notetaker:** Noelle

**Guests:** Marguerite Durant

**List keeper:** Dan

**Timekeeper:** Karen

**Mission statement read by:** Lara

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<p><b>Announcements/ Appreciations/ Acknowledgements</b></p>	<p><u>Announcements:</u> <u>Appreciations/Acknowledgements:</u> Tim appreciated the efforts of the teachers and staff in supporting the students and their parents and guardians during the COVID-19 crisis.</p>	
<p><b>Any thank you notes needed?</b></p>	<p>It was suggested that the BOT thank the hiring committee. Lara said that she would send cards to: (1) the members of the hiring committee; (2) Deirdre to let her know that we are thinking of her; and (3) FOH for carrying on their work during the COVID-19 crisis.</p>	

<b>BOT Visibility this month?</b>	None	
<b>Minutes</b>		Tim moved to approve the draft minutes; Kelly seconded; the BOT approved the minutes by consensus.
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	Marguerite reported that, during the meeting, she was unable to find the March BOT meeting minutes on the HCCPS web site.	
<b>School Closing Updates (Dan and Lara)</b>	<p>Tim suggested that we start to use language other than “school closing,” because school is still in session. There was a suggestion of using “remote learning.”</p> <p>Dan reported that the only people going into the building are: (1) teachers (if they need to get things; they must notify Dan in advance so that not too many people are there); (2) Carla (every Wednesday to process things); (3) Dan (to process things); and (4) the cleaners (Dan met with the owner of the company and they agreed the cleaners would do a “super clean,” room by room; they are also doing the summer cleaning now, which means they will be paid from this year’s budget and there will be a savings in next year’s budget).</p> <p>Lara reported that all teachers have sent families remote-learning plans with an average of 90 minutes of remote classrooms per day (morning meetings, classes, 1:1 meetings). The school is also focusing on mental and emotional wellness and continuing to focus on community building. HCCPS is following DESE’s recommendations that students have approximately three hours of learning each day (half of what they would do in school) and that this is a</p>	

	<p>combination of classroom and self-directed learning. There are also live school events every day at 2:00 p.m. (All School, live speakers, etc.). HCCPS is also monitoring engagement to make sure that there is some contact with each student in some capacity each week.</p> <p>HCCPS is encouraging parents to do what feels right for their families, particularly in larger families. The school’s message is “take care of yourself first and foremost.” HCCPS is also trying to help families who feel like they need more or less than the school is providing.</p>	
<p><b>Hiring Committee (Tim and Dan)</b></p>	<p>The Hiring Committee had a rigorous process and is recommending hiring Kate Saccento as the new Director of Administration. Tim pointed out that there are some areas where Kate will require oversight, but this will be in place as part of the evaluation process.</p> <p>Karen pointed out that the BOT was notified very close in time to the actual BOT interview and she was unable to attend. She suggested that this is something we are careful about in the future.</p> <p>Dawn pointed out that, when hiring people, it is not just about acknowledging areas where someone will need support and then evaluating them to make sure that the person is succeeding. Instead, it is about making sure the person has the support in those areas to be set up for success. Tim responded that Kate will be supported in additional ways (working with Dan before he goes, working with Lara and Deirdre).</p> <p>Kelly said that it would be helpful to put these things in writing for Kate. Dawn stated that it is important to identify the areas for growth and that waiting until the performance evaluation is too late. She explained that we want Kate to succeed. She also said that the</p>	<p>Dan will send a copy of the Hiring Committee’s report and recommendation to Nicole for the BOT meeting packet.</p> <p>Tim moved to offer the position to Kate; Matt seconded; the BOT approved making the offer to Kate.</p>

	<p>specific things where Kate will need assistance are not areas where Lara or Deirdre had worked (e.g., facilities).</p> <p>Lara suggested having a transition team consisting of Lara, Deirdre, Carla, and possibly a teacher to work on these things. Dan said that it would be appropriate for Domain Council to think about what kind of resources are available in the budget to make sure that Kate, if the BOT approves the Hiring Committee’s recommendation, succeeds.</p> <p>Karen volunteered to be part of the transition team as a member of the Facilities Committee. There was also a suggestion that the BOT might want to budget to keep Dan as a consultant.</p> <p>After the BOT voted, there was a discussion of the next steps: offering the job to Kate; and sending a letter to the community.</p> <p>Tim excused himself from the meeting and called Kate to offer her the position. He reported back that she accepted.</p>	
<p><b>School Expansion Review Update (Lara and Dan)</b></p>	<p>Lara reported that she is working with the consultant and meeting with the Prisms.</p> <p>Dan reviewed the numbers of students, teachers, and staff from FY14 to FY20. While the total population of students has gone up by 24.5%, the total number of employees has gone up by 42%. Dan explained that the main reason for the expansion was for HCCPS to have its own facility. The school has been able to buy its facility with the government loan, which then allowed for an expansion of the staff.</p>	
<p><b>Personnel Proposal (Lara and Kelly)</b></p>	<p>Kelly presented the proposal. Dan clarified that the proposal was the method for setting the pay scale. However, this is still determined based on the actual</p>	<p>Liz moved to approve; Matt seconded; the proposal was approved</p>

	<p>budget and needs to be embedded in a budget. If the money is not available, it cannot be implemented. In the past, there was an instance where this occurred (the 2008 recession) and the salary scale was deferred for a year).</p> <p>There was a discussion about the process of setting the Directors’ salaries as compared to the process of setting teachers’ salaries. It was confirmed that Kate will receive the same salary as Dan. Dan informed the BOT that, historically, an incoming Director makes the same salary as the outgoing Director he or she is replacing. Liz said that the Personnel Committee recognizes the importance of having transparency in the process of setting salaries for both Directors and teachers. Joe suggested and others agreed to having an item on a future agenda to address concerns raised by Paula, which have been raised by other teachers.</p> <p>Lara modified the beginning of the proposal to be clear how the process works.</p>	by consensus.
<b>New Business</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process for creating Directors’ salaries.</li> <li>2. Personnel Committee Proposal re: Single-Stream Hiring (as opposed to internal/external bifurcated process)</li> <li>3. Budget (in light of COVID-19)</li> </ol>	
<b>Committee Reports - Questions only</b>	None	
<b>Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation</b>	<p>Next Meeting: May 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Facilitator: Tim</p> <p>Snacks: N/A</p> <p>Drinks: N/A</p> <p>Newsletter blurb: Joe</p>	

<b>Review Action Items</b>	Reviewed action items.	
<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.	

**Tentative Agenda Topics for May 13, 2020 Board Meeting:**

- The process for creating Directors’ salaries.
- Expansion Review
- Remote Learning
- Personnel Committee Proposal re: Single-Stream Hiring (as opposed to internal/external bifurcated process).
- Budget (in light of COVID-19)
- Recruitment of New BOT members

## HCCPS Board of Trustees Interest Form

**Date:** May 4, 2020

**Your Name:** Sara Schieffelin

**Address:** 9 Hillcrest Dr, Florence, MA 01062

**Best phone number:** 413 207 1862

**Best email:** sararuthsch@gmail.com

**What is your current or most recent employment and what position do/did you hold?**

Director of Psychological Counseling Services, Williston Northampton School, Easthampton, MA

**How did you hear about and connect with HCCPS?**

My son is a student in the Indigos.

**What interests you most about the school or about education in general?**

I describe Hilltown to those who don't know it as "magical" and that our family "won the lottery" when our son got a spot here. Becoming a part of Hilltown has been a true blessing, and we feel so fortunate to be part of such a wonderful community.

Some of the many things we love and appreciate about Hilltown are: the emphasis the school places on developing individuals who are also good community members; nurturing love of learning and love of community in students and families; and that the school recognizes and supports different kinds of learners and learning.

To sum it up, my son feels so included and so recognized and valued for who he is. He has friends, older buddies, teachers and administrators from across the school that know him and reach out to him and make him feel like an important member of the school. Sam Detrich yells across the hallway "Seeger, nice hair cut" and Seeger beams. Seeger invites one of his 7th grade buddies to walk him into school, and without blinking an eye Ian or Finn leave their group of older friends, grab Seeger's outstretched hand, and walk him to his classroom; Dan or Lara or Kate or Deidre asks Seeger what he has in the box/bag/case/container (you name it because Seeger is always bringing in something new to share) and Seeger beams under the interest and attention being shone to him. His friends greet him when he walks into the classroom.

Such a solid, solid foundation for a kindergartener to have in his first experience at elementary school. What a gift.

**Why are you interested in serving on this Board?**

I am interested in supporting this wonderful institution that my family is so lucky to be a part of. Like a good relationship I feel that the more I put into this community, the more my family will get out of it.

**What skills do you hope to bring to the organization? (Please check any and explain below)?**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finance</li> <li>● Real Estate</li> <li>● Leadership X</li> <li>● Non-profit experience</li> <li>● Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Writing/editing X</li> <li>● Development X</li> <li>● Volunteering X</li> <li>● Commitment to school X</li> <li>● Law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public Relations X</li> <li>● Community Building X</li> <li>● Creativity X</li> <li>● Charter school policy</li> <li>● Corporate</li> <li>● other</li> </ul>
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**When is the earliest you would be available to serve?**

Whenever is needed

**If there is no space available on the Board of Trustees, are you interested in serving on a committee or in another way?**

- Yes X
- No

**Which committees or groups most interest you? Please check as many as you like.**

- BoT Finance
- BoT Personnel X
- BoT Site
- BoT Governance / Board Sustainability X
  
- Friends of Hilltown (501-c-3 fundraising organization) X

**The HCCPS Board uses consensus process for decision-making. Are you familiar or experienced with consensus process? If yes, please tell us where you have used it before. If not, do you think you'd be open to learning and using it?**

I just did a google search about the consensus process, and I would be open to learning and using it. I know my in-laws used it when they lived in a co-housing community.

**Please tell us about your prior Board experience?**

This would be my first experience serving on a board.

**Is there anything else you think we should know?** (Attach paper if needed)

***Thank you very much for your time and interest.***

*Please return this form to Deirdre Arthen at school or at: ([darthen@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:darthen@hilltowncharter.org))*



## HCCPS Board of Trustees Interest Form

**Date:** May 6, 2020

**Your Name:** Jennifer Matos

**Address:** 14 Silver Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075

**Best phone number:** 413.242.4748

**Best email:** jmatos@mtholyoke.edu

### **What is your current or most recent employment and what position do/did you hold?**

Assistant Professor  
Director of Middle, Secondary, and the Arts Teacher Licensure Programs  
Department of Psychology and Education  
Mount Holyoke College

### **How did you hear about and connect with HCCPS?**

I was looking for an educational environment for my daughter, Anna, when she was entering kindergarten, and hearing about HCCPS, entered the lottery. She was finally able to enroll in the fall of 2019, and was able to join her sister, Emmylou in the Indigos.

### **What interests you most about the school or about education in general ?**

I am interested in the mission of the school, particularly the desire to cultivate children's individual voices and the prioritization of community and collaboration. I have not seen any successful educational models where a school thrives without community. HCCPs intentional and authentic connection to the community--locally and globally--are a positive complement to the learning environment. As an educator, I feel that despite the wisdom of young people, their voices are sometimes silenced. I appreciate how HCCPS values all voices and sees them as valuable.

### **Why are you interested in serving on this board ?**

I appreciate how the faculty of HCCPS helps my daughters to grow, develop, and realize their potential. During the handling of school closures during COVID-19, I was awestruck by the dedication of the HCCPS faculty, staff, and administration to maintain the close knit community that exists at HCCPS. The way in which HCCPS has answered a call to service to the community, I am also inspired to do so. I feel service is especially necessary at this time in history, and having considered how I could be of service to others, I felt that my background in education as an educator, researcher, and social justice education trainer could be used to benefit the HCCPS community.

**What skills do you hope to bring to the organization (please check any and explain below)?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit experience <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing/editing <input type="checkbox"/> Development <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to school <input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Building <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter school policy <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other - Social Justice Education and Intergroup Dialogue
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**When is the earliest you would be available to serve? ASAP**

**If there is no space available on the Board of Trustees, are you interested in serving on a committee or in another way?**

- Yes
- No

**Which committees or groups most interest you? Please check as many as you like.**

- BoT Finance
- BoT Personnel
- BoT Site
- BoT Governance / Board Sustainability
- Friends of Hilltown (501-c-3 fundraising organization)

**The HCCPS Board uses consensus process for decision-making. Are you familiar or experienced with consensus process? If yes, please tell us where you have used it before. If not, do you think you'd be open to learning and using it?**

Yes I am. It is a process utilized within my academic department at Mount Holyoke. It is logical for an institution like HCCPS, that prioritizes community and collaboration, to utilize this model.

**Please tell us about your prior Board experience?**

2015 - Sunnyside Child Care Center, Board Member. Northampton, MA.

2008 - Multicultural Bridge (Berkshire Resources for Integration of Diverse Groups through Education), Board Member. Great Barrington, MA

**Is there anything else you think we should know?**

*Thank you very much for your time and interest.*

## HCCPS Board of Trustees Interest Form

Date: 4-28-2020

Your Name: Chris Korczak

Address: 64 Clark St #1, Easthampton, MA, 01027

Best phone number: 413-461-3045

Best email: ckorczak@gmail.com

**What is your current or most recent employment and what position do/did you hold?**

I am a book dealer, Owner of Chris Korczak, Bookseller.

**How did you hear about and connect with HCCPS?**

I have two students that attend.

**What interests you most about the school or about education in general ?**

I like the experimental nature of this school. I would be interested to learn more about any processes for evaluating teaching experiments. What most interests me is the apparent lack of public schools paying attention to charter successes. I would like to see that changed for the greater good.

**Why are you interested in serving on this board ?**

I am civically minded, and strongly believe that service is integral to a strong community/nation/world. My personal motto is "Be useful."

**What skills do you hope to bring to the organization (please check any and explain below)?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing/editing	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations
<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Building
<input type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Volunteering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit experience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commitment to school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter school policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Law	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate
		<input type="checkbox"/> other

**When is the earliest you would be available to serve?**

At the start of the new term/immediately.

**If there is no space available on the Board of Trustees, are you interested in serving on a committee or in another way?**

- Yes
- No

**Which committees or groups most interest you? Please check as many as you like.**

- BoT Finance
- BoT Personnel
- BoT Site
- BoT Governance / Board Sustainability
- Friends of Hilltown (501-c-3 fundraising organization)

**The HCCPS Board uses consensus process for decision-making. Are you familiar or experienced with consensus process? If yes, please tell us where you have used it before. If not, do you think you'd be open to learning and using it?**

I am - I have served on many committees and ballot initiatives that almost all operated in this manner.

**Please tell us about your prior Board experience?**

I have been on and participated on a few Easthampton City committees, including an Arts Grant Committee, Economic Development and Industrial Committee, Ranked Choice Voting Implementation Committee, Easthampton Charter Review Committee (participant, not official member), New School Ballot Committee, RCV Ballot Committee, Downtown Strategic Planning Sounding Board Committee, A Bookseller Trade Organization (IOBA) VP and now Member At Large.

**Is there anything else you think we should know?**

Nothing comes to mind. Thank you!

*Thank you very much for your time and interest.*

# Chris Korczak

## Bookseller

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### Chris Korczak

64 Clark St #1  
Easthampton, MA, 01027

413.461.3045  
ckorczak@gmail.com

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### Skills

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Social Activism, Community Organization, Assembling of Civic Communities, Entrepreneurship, Retail, Marketing, Sales, Online Advertising, Social Media, Business Development, Account Management, Web Analytics, Trade Shows, Rare Books, Institutional Selling, Auction Houses, Antiquarian Book Expertise

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### Experience

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#### Chris Korczak, Bookseller / Owner

November 2006 - PRESENT, Easthampton, MA

- Renown expert in tabletop RPG material
- Founded company with negligible capital
- One person operation involving all aspects of small business, from janitorial work to contract development
- Current Member at Large within book trade organization IOBA

#### Forster & Garbus, Attorneys at Law / Supervisor

May 2004 - August 2006, Farmingdale, NY

- Successfully coached collectors on most effective methods
- Nearly flawless legal follow-up on such issues as income executions, information subpoenas, property executions, turnover orders, restraining notices, as well as efficiency therein.
- Maintained great client relations and interaction to meet numerous needs, expectations, and inquiries
- Carefully monitored employees for efficiency and compliance, with high success rate
- Effectively maintained payroll issues such as calculating bonuses and managing schedules
- Deftly handled morale issues and kept staff happy and productive
- Appropriately mass dunned correspondence in a timely manner consistent with high standards
- Accurately reviewed legal letters before attorney review and corrected any mistakes therein

## **Acclaim Entertainment, Inc / Computer Programmer**

September 1998 - December 2000, Glen Cove, NY

- Designed, created, and modified applications for use with in house programming
- Worked with OpenGL, Access, MFC, Visual Basic, and C++ to design programs from the floor up
- Independently thrived with little to no supervision

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## **Education**

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### **Dowling College / Bachelor of Computer Science**

2003, Oakdale, NY

- Heavy emphasis on Anthropology and Philosophy

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## **Civic Duties**

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### **City of Easthampton**

- ECA+ Arts Grant Committee
- Economic Development and Industrial Committee
- Ranked Choice Voting Implementation Committee
- Easthampton Charter Review Committee (participant)
- New School Ballot Committee
- RCV Ballot Committee
- Downtown Strategic Planning Sounding Board Committee
- City Councilor Campaign Treasurer

## JENNIFER MONTAÑEZ MATOS

Curriculum Vitae

Spring 2020

Mount Holyoke College  
Department of Psychology and Education  
Reese Building 209B  
50 College Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075

Email: [jmatos@mtholyoke.edu](mailto:jmatos@mtholyoke.edu)  
Phone: 413.242.4748

### EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

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- 2011**                    **Ed.D., University of Massachusetts at Amherst**, Amherst, MA  
Department of Student Development  
Dissertation: Fulfilling Their Dreams: Latina/o College Student Narratives  
on the Impact of Parental Involvement on Their Academic Engagement
- 2003**                    **M.A.T., Smith College**, Northampton, MA  
**Massachusetts State Teacher Certification** (English Language and Literature)  
Department of Education and Child Study
- 1996**                    **A.B., Smith College**, Northampton, MA  
English Language and Literature

### PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

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- 2019 – present**            **Mount Holyoke College, Assistant Professor and Director of Middle,  
Secondary, and the Arts Teacher and Licensure Programs**, South Hadley, MA  
Department of Psychology and Education
- 2015 – 2019**            **Mount Holyoke College, Visiting Lecturer**, South Hadley, MA  
Department of Psychology and Education
- 2016 – 2017**            **Mount Holyoke College, Visiting Lecturer**, South Hadley, MA  
Professional and Graduate Education Program
- 2016 – 2017**            **Mount Holyoke College, Acting Director of Middle and Secondary Teacher  
and Licensure Programs**, South Hadley, MA  
Division of Education
- 2015**                    **Greenfield Community College, Lecturer**, Greenfield, MA  
Division of Humanities

- 2013 – 2014**            **Our Lady of the Elms College, Adjunct Faculty**, Chicopee, MA  
 Department of Sociology  
 Department of Social Work
- 2012 – 2013**            **Smith College School for Social Work, Adjunct Faculty**, Northampton, MA  
 Department of Social Work
- 2008 – 2012**            **University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Lecturer**, Amherst, MA  
 Department of Student Development

#### PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS

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- Matos, J.M.M. (revise and resubmit). Utilizing Latinx Cultural Capital for the Retention and Graduation of Latinx Students in Higher Education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*.
- Matos, J.M.M. (2019). La familia and other secret ingredients to Latinx student success. New York: Peter Lang.
- Matos, J.M.D. & Norskey, G.E. (2018). “Choosing Each Other: Love, Friendship, and Racism” in M.R. Hall & K. Smith (Eds.), *Uncommon Bonds: Women Reflect on Race and Friendship*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Matos, J.M. (2018). Book Review: *Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race* (Beverly Tatum, 2017, Basic Books), for *Humanity and Society* DOI: 10.1177/0160597618761471
- Matos, J.M.D. (2015). La Familia: The Important Ingredient for Latina/o College Student Engagement and Persistence, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48 (3), 436-453.

#### AWARDS

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- 2012                        Spotlight Award, Smith College
- 2000                        Woman of Power Award, Zonta Club of Northampton, MA
- 1997                        Mollie Rogers/Newman Association Prize, Smith College, Northampton, MA

#### CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

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- Matos, J.M. (2019, November). The elephant in the classroom: Addressing racism through dialogue. Professional and Organizational Network in Higher Education Conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- Matos, J.M. (2017, November). Latina/o parental resilience (and other anti-colonial tools in education).



Paper presented at the Association for Humanist Sociologists, Havana, Cuba.

- Matos, J.M. (2017, November). Building a “beloved community”: How to engage college students in dialogues about racism. National Association for Multicultural Education Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Matos, J.M. (2014, May). Madres, Mistolín, and Maria: What do Latina students bring to PWIs to survive and thrive? National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, Indianapolis, IN.
- Buehring, B.A., & Matos, J.M. (2014, May). Calling out vs. calling in: A process of building community. National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, Indianapolis, IN.
- Matos, J.M. (2013, November). Becoming the light: How Latina students persist at predominantly white institutions. National Association of Multicultural Education, Oakland, CA.
- Matos, J.M. (2011, December). Crossing the finish line: What do Latina/o students needs for the race? National Association of Student Personnel Administrator, Atlanta, GA.
- Matos, J.M. (2011, November). Latina/os in education: Reframing parental involvement. National Association of Multicultural Education, Chicago, IL.
- Matos, J.M. (2009, May). Latina/o student unions and the performance/production of ideology. National Conference on Race and Ethnicity, San Francisco, CA.

#### INVITED TRAININGS, LECTURES, AND PANELS

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| 2010 – present | Trainer, Social Justice Education for Residence Life Staff. Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT.   |
| 2017           | Panelist, “Women Leading Change Together.” Building on Our Momentum Conference, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA.   |
| 2016           | “From the Crib to College: Latina/o Parental Engagement”. Collaborative for Educational Services Social Justice PLC. Northampton, MA   |
| 2014           | Panelist, “Breaking Barriers: An evening of thoughtful and engaging discussions about diversity and inclusion.” Alumnae Association of Smith College, Association of Latina Alumnae of Smith College, and Smith College Club of New York. New York, NY |
| 2014           | Keynote Address for “Disability Visibility Day”. Smith College, Northampton, MA  |

- 2012 Keynote Address “What Love Looks Like in Public” Student Leader Training. Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2012 Residence Life Workshop on Bullying and Harassment. Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2012 Rainbow Perspectives Training. Rutgers University, NJ
- 2011 Dialogues in Diversity Luncheon Series. Rutgers University, NJ
- 2011 Ableism: The Intersection of Culture, Race, Gender, Sexuality and Class. Project Civility, Rutgers University, NJ
- 2011 Ableism Training. Diversity Council, Rutgers University, NJ
- 2011 Panelist, Summer Lecture Series: Anti-Racism Symposium. Smith College School for Social Work, Northampton, MA
- 2010-2015 Wesleyan Diversity Educator Training. Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT
- 2010 Adulthood and Positive Youth Development Workshop, Division of Youth Services. Norwood, MA
- 2010 Diversity Peer Program Workshop. Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
- 2009-2010 “Crossing the Line” Training. Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
- 2008 “Diversity Day” Facilitator Training Workshop. Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Great Barrington, MA
- 2008 Lecture. “The Presidential Election: Is There a ‘Post-Racial’ America?” Bard College at Simon’s Rock, Great Barrington, MA
- 2008 Paraprofessional Residential Life Staff Diversity Training Workshop. Worcester State University, Worcester, MA
- 2008 Panelist, “Identity/Perception: Conflict, Power, and Communication”. Smith College Alumnae and Students of Color Conference, Northampton, MA
- 2008 Social Justice Training, Student Government Association Cabinet. Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2007 Social Justice Training Day, Residence Life Staff Training. Smith College, Northampton, MA

- 2007 Intergroup Dialogue on Gender. Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2007 Intergroup Dialogue on White Privilege. Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2007 Dialogue on Race, Power and Privilege, Smith College, Northampton, MA
- 2005 “Alphabet Soup: Training on GLBT Issues for Residence Life Staff”. Clark University, Worcester, MA

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- 2015 - present**      **Mount Holyoke College, Visiting Lecturer, South Hadley, MA**  
 Psychology of Racism  
 Social Justice in Education  
 Observing and Assisting in Inclusive Classrooms  
 The Process of Teaching and Learning in Middle and Secondary Schools  
 Wonder Woman: The Original Social Justice Warrior  
 Student Teaching in Secondary and Middle Schools  
 Practicum Seminar: Teaching and Learning: Middle and Secondary Education  
 Self-Awareness in Education  
 GLBT Issues in Schools  
 Social Justice in Education Lab
- 2016 – 2017**      **Mount Holyoke College, Professional and Graduate Programs, Visiting Lecturer, South Hadley, MA**  
 Social Justice: A Teacher’s Role  
 Seminar on Teaching and Learning in Middle and Secondary Schools
- 2014-2015**      **Roger L. Putnam Vocational Technical Academy, Teacher, Springfield, MA**  
 Grades 9 – 10 English Teacher
- 2015**      **Greenfield Community College, Lecturer, Greenfield, MA**  
 Introduction to Topics in Humanities
- 2013-2014**      **Our Lady of the Elms College, Adjunct Faculty, Chicopee, MA**  
 Race and Ethnicity  
 Introduction to Cultural Competence
- 2012-2013**      **Smith College School for Social Work, Adjunct Faculty, Northampton, MA**  
 Racism in the United States: Implications for Social Work Practice  
 Advanced Studies in Race and Racism: Implications for Social Work Practice

- 2008-2012**                    **University of Massachusetts, Lecturer, Amherst, MA**  
 Social Diversity in Education  
 Social Issues in Education – Heterosexism  
 Social Issues in Education – Ableism  
 Social Issues in Education – Heterosexism (graduate level course)  
 Practicum – Social Justice Education Reflective Practice (graduate level course)
- 2003**                            **Chapin Alternative High School, Teacher, Chicopee, MA**  
 Grades 10 – 12 English and AP English Teacher
- 2003**                            **Northampton High School, Teacher, Northampton, MA**  
 Grade 11 English and AP English Teacher
- 1998**                            **St. Matthew’s Elementary School, Teacher, Springfield, MA**  
 Grades 6-8 English Language Arts, General Science, and Religious Education Teacher
- 1996**                            **Institute for Urban Education, Barnard College, Teaching Fellow, New York, NY**  
 Grades 6 – 7 English Language Arts and Ecology Teacher

#### RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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- 2016 – present                **Principal Investigator**  
 Mount Holyoke College
- 2009 – 2011                    **Research Assistant**  
 Caring as Pedagogy Project  
 Dr. Maurianne Adams  
 University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
- 2008                              **Research Assistant**  
 Intergroup Dialogue Coding Project  
 Dr. Ximena Zúñiga  
 University of Massachusetts, Amherst

#### THESES ADVISED

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- 2020**                            **Sarah Shuler-Barwick, B.A. Candidate, Mount Holyoke College**
- 2018**                            **Kirina Gair-Macmichael, B.A. Candidate, Mount Holyoke College**

**2018**                      **Talia Berkowitz**, B.A. Candidate, Mount Holyoke College

**2016**                      **Grace Kimball**, B.A., Mount Holyoke College

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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**2012**                      **Center for Community Collaboration, Smith College**, Northampton, MA  
Associate Director

**2009-2010**              **Dartmouth College**, Hanover, NH  
Assistant Dean of Students, Advisor to Latina/o Students

**2008-2009**              **Bard College at Simon's Rock**, Great Barrington, MA  
Director of Multicultural Affairs

**2005-2006**              **Clark University**, Worcester, MA  
Assistant Dean of ALANA and LGBT Students

**2000-2003**              **Mount Holyoke College**, South Hadley, MA  
Associate Director of Residence Life and Advisor to ALANA and LGBT Students

#### GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

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2020                      Mount Holyoke College Faculty Research Grant for research and travel in Puerto Rico, \$1,515

2019                      Mount Holyoke College Nexus Grant for Curriculum Development, \$2,000  
Mount Holyoke College Faculty Research Grant for research and travel in Puerto Rico, \$2,214

2018                      National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity Scholarship, \$3,950  
Mount Holyoke College Nexus Grant for Curriculum Development, \$4,000  
Mount Holyoke College Teaching and Learning Initiative Fellowship, \$5,000

#### COLLEGE SERVICE

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2020                      Program Director, Cientificas Presente!, San Juan, Puerto Rico  
Committee Member, LITS RIIS Position Search Committee, Mount Holyoke College, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA

2019                      Instructor, EDUC205 (CBL Course), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
Instructor, EDUST351PR (Partnership with San Juan, Puerto Rico), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
Program Director, Cientificas Presente!, San Juan, Puerto Rico

- COACHE Survey Committee Member, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
- 2018 DESE Program Review Committee, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
 Instructor, EDUC205 (CBL Course), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
 Program Director, Cientificas Presente!, San Juan, Puerto Rico  
 Faculty Show, Writer and Cast Member, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
- 2017 Instructor, EDUC205 (CBL Course), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
 Presider, LEAP Symposium, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
 Faculty Advisor, Familia, Mount Holyoke College  
 Faculty Advisor, Mary Lyon Living Learning Community, Mount Holyoke College
- 2016 Instructor, EDUC205 (CBL Course), Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA  
 Panelist, New Faculty Orientation, Mount Holyoke College  
 Convener, Community Conversations, Mount Holyoke College  
 Presider, LEAP Symposium, Mount Holyoke College  
 Faculty Advisor, OUTreach, Mount Holyoke College
- 2011 Co-organizer, Social Justice Education Conference, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
- 2009 – 2010 Chair, Latina/o Honor society Committee, Dartmouth College  
 Member, Latina/o Recruitment Planning Committee, Dartmouth College

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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- 2018 Book Proposal Review, Routledge
- 2018 Manuscript Review, *Journal of Latinos in Education*
- 2017 Manuscript Review, *Equity and Excellence in Education*
- 2017 Proposal Reviewer, National Association of Multicultural Education Conference
- 2011 Manuscript Review, *Equity and Excellence in Education*
- 2011 Proposal Reviewer, National Association of Multicultural Education Conference

## MEMBERSHIPS

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American Educational Research Association  
 National Association of Multicultural Education

## REFERENCES

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Maurianne Adams  
 Professor Emerita  
 University of Massachusetts Amherst

Department of Student Development  
adams@umass.edu

Katherine Binder, Chair, Department of Psychology and Education  
Professor of Psychology  
Reese Building  
Mount Holyoke College  
50 College Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075  
kbinder@mtholyoke.edu

Bailey W. Jackson  
Professor Emeritus  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Department of Student Development  
bwj23@comcast.net  
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# Sara Schieffelin, LICSW

9 Hillcrest Drive • Florence, Massachusetts 01062 • sararuthsch@gmail.com • 413.207.1862

## Education

2006-2008      **Master of Social Work**, Smith College School for Social Work, *Northampton, MA*

1997-2001      **Bachelor of Arts**, McGill University, *Montreal, Quebec, Canada*

## Clinical Experience

August 2018- present

**Director of Psychological Counseling Services**, The Williston Northampton School, *Easthampton, MA*

- Counseling director at independent boarding school serving 460 local, national, and international students in grades 7-12
- Counsel individual students and coordinate care with parents, teachers, and outsider providers
- Collaborate with administrators and faculty to address clinical needs of students
- Participate in, facilitate and support campus-wide initiatives related to health and wellness
- Provided 24 hour on-call crisis intervention and support by phone to students
- As member of Independent School Counselor group, participate in bi-annual meetings, and on-line forum

January 2018-present

**Clinical Therapist and Clinical Supervisor**, Private Practice, *Northampton, MA*

- Provide therapy services to individuals, couples, children, and families
- Provide clinical supervision to license-eligible social workers

November 2012-July 2018

**Clinical Director (title change from Senior Clinical Case Manager in June 2015)**, Transitional-Age Youth Program, ServiceNet, *Greenfield and Northampton, MA*

- Clinical director of multidisciplinary team that delivered community-based residential and outreach services to 60 older adolescents and young adults receiving Department of Mental Health (DMH) services in Hampshire and Franklin Counties
- Under Contract Director and in collaboration with Program Manager, provided oversight to 15 case management staff, two Program Managers, one Assistant Program Manager, two Clinical Case Managers (LCSW/LICSWs) and four MSW student interns
- Collaborated with senior administrative team to address clinical, programmatic, and staffing needs of the division
- As member of senior clinical team and in collaboration with other community and emergency services providers, provided clinical consultation and risk management planning for acute and high-risk clients
- Provided program coverage, as needed, in absence of Contract Director
- Facilitated monthly support group for parents of program participants
- Conducted quarterly half-day Motivational Interviewing (MI) trainings, bi-monthly MI practice groups for division managers, and monthly MI practice groups for division staff, as member of the MI training team
- Provided one-time and on-going training to program staff and managers on multiple topics including Motivational Interviewing, self-care, engagement, clinical documentation, team-building, workplace safety, program and agency policies and procedures, e.g.
- Provided weekly clinical supervision to two LCSW/LICSWs, one Program Manager, one Assistant Program Manager, up to eight case management staff, and one MSW intern
- Other clinical, programmatic, and administrative duties as listed below in the Clinical Case Manager position description



November 2011-November 2012

**Clinical Case Manager**, Transitional-Age Youth Program, ServiceNet, *Northampton, MA*

- Conducted clinical assessments, developed treatment plans, created well-being plans, and offered other clinical services including therapy and crisis intervention for 15-20 program participants
- Provided weekly group counseling to program participants
- Coordinated and collaborated with other agencies, providers, and stakeholders, including crisis services, hospitals, therapists, psychiatrists, doctors, schools, courts, probation, DMH, parents, and family members to provide comprehensive mental and behavioral health, and substance abuse services to program participants
- Prepared and presented clinical summaries for consultation on program participants to DMH head psychiatrist and ServiceNet's senior clinical team
- Provided after-hours on-call crisis intervention and support by phone to TAY participants

May 2009-November 2011

**In-Home Therapy (IHT) Clinician**, Northeast Center for Youth and Families, *Easthampton, MA*

- Offered community-based, client-centered, intensive clinical services, including individual and family therapy in English and Spanish, to children, adolescents, and families in home, school, and community settings
- Offered advocacy, referrals, collateral contact, and coordination of services to IHT clients
- Maintained client records, including assessments, treatment plans, case notes, and Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessments
- Provided after-hours on-call crisis intervention and support by phone in English and Spanish to IHT clients

November 2008-April 2009

**Family Stabilization Team (FST) Clinician**, Clinical and Support Options, *Greenfield, MA*

- Provided short-term, community-based, client-centered, intensive clinical services, including individual and family therapy, to children, adolescents, and families in home, school, and community settings
- Offered mobile crisis evaluations to FST clients
- Other clinical, programmatic, and administrative duties as listed above in the IHT position description

July 2008-January 2009

**Clinical Coordinator**, Step Program, DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services, *Greenfield, MA*

- Conducted clinical assessments for all transition-to-independent-living applicants, former foster care and homeless youth ages 18-21
- Provided clinical supervision, consultation, and training to six direct care staff
- Provided therapeutic services to Step Program participants, such as social skills development and substance use/abuse treatment and prevention
- Maintained client records and provided service reports for Step Program participants
- Participated in monthly review meetings with Department of Children and Families for DCF sponsored Step Program participants

September 2007-April 2008

**Social Work Intern**, Chiang Mai Neurological Hospital, *Chiang Mai, Thailand*

- One of three students from the Smith College School for Social Work selected for an international fieldwork pilot program
- Worked with multidisciplinary Thai team in outpatient dementia clinic. Team included neurologists, nurses, physical & occupational therapists, psychologists, social workers, nutritionists, dentists, and nurses' aides
- Cared for dementia clients at adult day-care program; organized and implemented physically, cognitively, and socially stimulating activities for day-care clients, including exercise, art activities, and games
- Provided support and treatment advice to families and caretakers of dementia clients while utilizing culturally appropriate therapeutic interventions
- Engaged in outreach to dementia clients and their families living in rural Thailand
- Offered translation services to program staff and clients

September 2006-April 2007

**Social Work Intern**, Partnership for Active Community Engagement (PACE) Program, Mental Health Center of Boulder County, *Boulder, CO*

- Provided psychosocial assessments, ongoing counseling, group therapy, casework management, and crisis intervention for 10 dually diagnosed clients at a jail diversion program
- Provided information and referral services to program participants
- Developed integrative treatment plans with multidisciplinary team consisting of a psychiatrist, nurse, probation officer, therapists, case managers, substance abuse counselor, office manager, and program supervisor

## Teaching Experience

March 2018-present

**Trainer/Consultant**, Health Education and Training Institute, *Portland, ME*

- Independently contracted to teach Motivational Interviewing to various agencies and organizations

July 2019

**Trainer**, Cutchins Programs for Children and Families, Inc., *Northampton, MA*

- Taught 12-hour Motivational Interviewing basic training to 7 program staff

July 2016, June and July 2017, June 2018 & June 2019

**Instructor**, Smith College School for Social Work, *Northampton, MA*

- Taught 6 and 12-hour continuing education seminars entitled *Motivational Interviewing: Using Compassionate Conversation to Move Clients Toward Health and Change* to up to 25 Licensed Practitioners of the Healing Arts (LPHAs)

Aug. 2017, Aug. 2018 & June 2019

**Guest Lecturer**, Smith College School for Social Work, *Northampton, MA*

- Taught 2-hour Motivational Interviewing class to MSW students in medical social work practice class

2012-2013 academic year & 2014-2018 academic years

**Clinical Instructor**, Smith College School for Social Work, *Northampton, MA*

- Provided clinical supervision and oversight to masters' level social work students in site-based internship at the Transitional Age Youth Program

September 2017

**Trainer**, DIAL/SELF Youth and Community Services, *Greenfield, MA*

- Taught 12-hour Motivational Interviewing basic training to 15 program staff

Winter 2016

**Lecturer**, Westfield State University, *Westfield, MA*

- Independently contracted to create a 45-minute on-line module entitled *Motivational Interviewing and Supervision* for the Social Work Continuing Education Certificate Program for use in the Department's Leadership Academy

## Skills and Certifications

- Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)
- Member of National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and NASW Massachusetts Chapter
- Member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT)
- Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) certificate, from Division of Graduate and Continuing Education and Department of Social Work, Westfield State University, Westfield, MA
- Trained in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF CBT)
- Experience and interest in multicultural counseling
- Advanced Spanish conversation and intermediate writing skills
- Proficient in MS Word for Windows/Mac, PowerPoint, and web-based communication, research, and record keeping

## **Awards and Recognitions**

- 2018 Recipient of the Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) Honorary Motivational Interviewing Trainer's Award

## **Other Interests**

- Ceramics; making gemstone and metal jewelry; knitting; gardening; health and fitness; mindfulness



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Board Report: School Expansion Evaluation**

**May 13, 2020**

*Dan Klatz*

*Lara Ramsey*

*Deirdre Arthen*

With the Long Range Plan (LRP) developed in 2013, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School made a commitment to expand the size of the school by increasing the number of students in grades 6, 7, and 8 from sixty to ninety. Now, in keeping with the plans laid out in the LRP, the Board of Directors has asked the Educational Domain to evaluate the school expansion. This evaluation considers the school expansion in terms of viability and the school's mission. The evaluation is organized around the three domains: administrative, teaching & learning, and family & community.

I) Administration: evaluated finances, student population and enrollment, and administrative roles (pp. 1-6)

II) Teaching & Learning: evaluated community of learners, integration of arts and academics, and academic success. (pp. 7-11)

III) Family & Community Engagement: evaluated parent community, volunteering, and student leadership. (pp. 12-13)

**I) Administration:**

Finance:

The goal of the expansion was to fund the purchase of our school building.

The major portion of the expansion consisted of adding 30 additional students over a 3-year time period, by increasing the 6th grade by 10 students and ultimately the 7th and 8th grades by 10 students each as well. At the time of transition Purples had 22 students with one teacher and one TA and increased to 32 students with 2 teachers and 1 TA. Prisms started with 39 students with 2 teachers and 1 TA (and a dedicated SE TA), a .25 FTE art teacher, .25 music teacher, .40 Spanish teacher, and a .4 tech teacher. Currently Prisms have 59 students with 4 classroom teachers, 1 dedicated SPED teacher, 4 TAs, a .5 FTE music teacher (shared with Purples) .6 FTE Spanish teacher, and a .4 FTE tech teacher. Also, as a result of the expansion, we have added a Student Services Coordinator, more administrative staff and the PE teacher has increased from .6 to 1.0 FTE.

Given that the current average tuition per student is approximately \$14,000 per student, our annual income from expansion is roughly \$420,000. The cost of extra staffing is currently approximately \$450,000.

**Conclusions: Rather than the expansion funding the building purchase, the excellent loan deal we received from the USDA has actually funded the expansion.**



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Student Population and Enrollment:

The following chart displays the profile of the student population in terms of Special Needs during course of the expansion( 10 and 20 are Special Needs codes):



**HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AT HILLTOWN FY13 TO FY20

**FY13 (Brassworks)**                      % of students on IEPs: 13.4%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	18	18	18	15	18	15	11	18	149
10		2	2	2	5	2	5	5		23
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>172</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	18	18	18	15	18	15	11	18	149
Sensory (Hearing)					1					1
Communication			2		2		1			5
Emotional								1		1
Health		1				1	1	3		6
Specific Learning				1	1	1				3
Multitple				1			1	1		3
Autism							2			2
Neurological		1			1					2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>172</b>

**FY14 (Brassworks)**                      % of students on IEPs: 16.1%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	18	18	14	16	20	14	17	12	146
IEP closed							1		1	2
10	1		2	5	4	2	5	3	3	25
20				1						1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>174</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	18	18	14	16	20	14	17	12	146
Sensory (Hearing)							1			1
Communication	1			1	2	1	1			6
Health				1	1			2	1	5
Specific Learning				1	3	1		1		6
Multitple			1			1	2		1	5
Autism							1		2	3
Neurological				1			1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>174</b>

**FY15 (Easthampton)**                      % of students on IEPs: 18.7%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	19	20	19	13	16	24	15	14	157
IEP closed									1	1
10	3	1		3	5	5	8	5	1	31
20					2	1		1		4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>193</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	19	20	19	13	16	24	15	14	157
Communication	2	1			1	1	1	1		7
Emotional							2			2
Health					1	2	1	1	1	6
Specific Learning				2	4	2	1		1	10
Multitple				1	1		1	3		6
Autism							1			1
Neurological						1	1	1		3
Dev. Delay	1									1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>193</b>

**FY16 (Easthampton)**                      % of students on IEPs: 19.9%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	17	20	18	17	15	22	25	17	169
10	3	3	1	3	4	6	6	6	5	37
20						1	2		1	4
40						1				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>211</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	17	20	18	18	15	23	26	17	169
Communication		2	1	1		1	1	1	1	8
Emotional							1			1
Health				1		2	2	2	1	8
Specific Learning				1	3	4	1	1		10
Multitple					1	1		1	3	6
Neurological							3	1	1	5
Dev. Delay	3	1								4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>211</b>



**HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL**

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS AT HILLTOWN FY13 TO FY20

**FY17 (Easthampton)** % of students on IEPs: 20.6%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None										173
IEP closed							1			1
10	1	3	4	3	4	4	7	10	5	41
20							1	1		3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>218</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None										173
Communication			2	1	1		1	1	1	7
Emotional			1					2		3
Health		1			2	1	3	3	2	12
Specific Learning				2	1	2	4	2	1	12
Multiple						1	1			2
Neurological								3	1	4
Dev. Delay	2	2	1							5
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>218</b>

**FY18 (Easthampton)** % of students on IEPs: 20.6%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	17	17	17	18	17	25	23	21	173
IEP closed			1							1
10	2	2	3	3	3	4	7	5	9	38
20		1		1				2	2	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>218</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	17	17	17	18	17	25	23	21	173
Communication	1			1	1	1		1		5
Emotional				1			1		2	4
Health			1			1	3	3	3	11
Specific Learning		1		1	2	2	2	3	2	13
Multiple							1		1	2
Neurological				1					3	4
Dev. Delay	1	2	3							6
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>218</b>

**FY19 (Easthampton)** % of students on IEPs: 21.1%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	17	17	18	17	17	25	20	23	172
10	2	3	3	3	4	5	7	9	8	44
20			1		1					2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>218</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	18	17	17	18	17	17	25	20	23	172
Communication	2	1			1	1	1		1	7
Emotional					1		1	1		3
Health				1	1	1	1	4	4	12
Specific Learning			2	2	1	3	2	3	3	16
Multiple								1		1
Neurological					1		2			3
Dev. Delay		2	2							4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>218</b>

**FY20 (Easthampton)** % of students on IEPs: 19.7%

PLACEMENT	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	19	18	18	18	19	17	23	26	19	177
IEP closed	1									1
10	2	2	3	3	3	4	8	6	7	38
20				1		1	1			3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>218</b>

DISABILITY	GrK	Gr1	Gr2	Gr3	Gr4	Gr5	Gr6	Gr7	Gr8	Total
None	17	18	18	18	19	17	23	26	19	175
Communication	2	2	1				1			6
Emotional						1		1	1	3
Health					1	1	2		4	8
Specific Learning				2	2	2	4	4	2	16
Multiple							2	1	1	4
Neurological				1		1				2
Dev. Delay	1	2	1							4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>218</b>



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The following chart displays changes in the staffing relative to changes in the size of the student population:

FY 2014		FY 2020		Percent Change
Total FTE	31.4	Total FTE	44.6	42%
# of Students	175	# of Students	218	24.6%
Student to Staff	5.57	Student to Staff	4.89	
Teacher FTE	13.3	Teacher FTE	21.7	
Student to Teacher	13.9	Student to Teacher	10.05	
TA FTE*	8.37	TA FTE	11.47	
Student to TA	20.9	Student to TA	19.019	

Conclusions: **While the student population increased by 24.6 % over the course of the expansion, the total number of educational staff increased by 42%.** Some of this is explained by the fact that 8 students were added to K-5 without any changes to the staff. But most of this is explained by more than doubling the teaching staff in grades 6-8 while the student population increased by 33 %. While there is some perception that the additional student population is one of higher needs, the data does not support that conclusion. Rather, we see inconsistent data, with the population of high needs students going down in two of the four years and going up in two of the four years **At this point, adding more staff is not an option, as it is not financially feasible. There may be ways of reallocating resources to better meet ongoing needs.**

Administrative Roles:





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The biggest addition over the course of the expansion as the addition of a student services coordinator. With the change in leadership as a result of the retirement of two of the longtime school leaders, changes to roles and responsibilities may be considered to better distribute major oversight duties in the organization. This could be a focus in the coming year for the Board of Trustees as well as a topic for the next Long Range Plan.

Conclusions:

A major goal of the 2013 Long Range Plan was the following: **Ensure that HCCPS has a financially viable home suitable to the expanded enrollment and program that meets current and future needs over the next 20 years and that is educationally, environmentally, and financially sustainable.** This goal was to be met through expanding the school to 218 students with the bulk of the students (30) added in grades 6-8. The mechanism was to add 10 students in Grade 6, and then allow those students to rise through Grades 7 and 8. This expansion would change the economics of the school and free up additional resources for occupancy costs.

The school was very fortunate to not only find a new home, but to secure a loan from the United States Department of Agriculture. The remarkably low cost of this loan has made the building affordable in the short, medium, and long term.

At the same time, the school has expanded educational staffing at a rate that exceeds the rate of added students. This has been possible because of the unanticipated low costs of our loan. Further expansion of staffing is not financially feasible.

The ongoing shared management structure of the school can meet the needs of the institution. However it may be necessary to rearrange some of the duties to enhance this shared management structure and make the individual jobs more equitable.



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## II Educational Program

### Methodology

Using two platforms, electronic surveys and focus group interviews, we gathered information about the successes and shortcomings of the educational program as it relates to our school expansion. The questions for surveys and focus groups (Appendices A-C) were determined through iterative conversations with teachers, advice from an outside consultant (Paul Hyry-Dermith), and in consultation with Board leadership. These sources were used in combination with the experiences and observations of the Director of Teaching and Learning over the last three years.

### Participants

- Focus groups for staff (three groups of 8-12) and parents (two groups of 10) were facilitated and analyzed by the consultant (Appendix A).
- Focus groups for staff were organized to include teachers of older and younger students as well as a variety of other staff roles.
- One parent group was organized for participants whose children began in Hilltown in younger years and transitioned into older grades.
- The other parent group was organized for participants whose children joined Hilltown in 6th-8th grade.
- The opportunity to participate in focus group interviews was available to all (communicated through the newsletter). The Directors sent personal invitations to twenty parents with the intention of bringing together participants with demographic diversity (race, class, number of children) and a range of student learning and social abilities. The resulting groups consisted of both volunteers and recruited participants.
- The Director of Teaching and Learning interviewed two groups of Prisms (15 volunteer 7th & 8th graders altogether). The electronic survey went to all parents in the school. Survey data included responses from 45 (or 50% of) parents with children in 6th-8th grade. See Appendix D for survey questions.

### Findings

#### *Overall*

Staff, students, and parents believe the school expansion has been broadly positive for individual students and for the community as a whole. The mission of Hilltown was referenced repeatedly and our efforts to fulfill it matter to parents, students and teachers. Cross-age relationships are cherished by staff, parents, and students of all ages. The expansion has broadened the social pool for older students, invigorated the student community, and created more social choices. Though the school is bigger than it was, the school still feels small and safe compared to other schools. 99% of parents of 6th-8th grade who responded to the survey believe that Hilltown successfully creates a positive social-emotional environment for their children.



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6th-8th grade students identified mini-courses, buddies, approachable teachers, and social flexibility as some of their favorite parts of being an older student in the school. Students value rights and responsibilities including recess “even as a middle schooler,” leadership in the Winter Fair, and the Mummings play, among others. Students appreciate their relationships with TAs. Repeatedly, students noted how nice it is to “know basically everyone”.

Against a backdrop of overall satisfaction and appreciation, the evaluation process surfaced several specific areas for improvement.

#### *Organization of Grades*

Multiple staff and parents raised questions about the design of sixth grade as the stand-alone grade. Staff and parents describe a disruption in the whole-school community beginning in sixth grade (while acknowledging that sixth grade teachers do an excellent job of welcoming new students and building community within the grade). Parents whose children have spent younger years in the school identify a “big step” between 5th and 6th grade (parents whose children are new to the school in 6th grade did not offer this observation). Several parents said that 7th grade was easier for their students (“more relaxed”) than sixth grade; transitions from 6th to 7th were reported to be “smooth”. Multiple parents and students repeatedly brought up being separated from 5th grade friends “for too long” after leaving the Reds or Oranges. Students advocated for shared recesses and more activities with adjacent grades (upper and lower) at the beginning of the year. Teachers pointed out that there are academic reasons to reconsider the placement of our stand-alone grade.

#### *Culture of Older Grades*

Multiple teachers perceive that grades 6-8 have become dominant and separate (both in terms of location and in terms of culture). The philosophy of Hilltown seems to change in sixth grade; faculty and parents would like to see less of a stark contrast between K-5 and 6-8, culturally, while still being responsive to the needs of older children. Staff requested revisiting whole-school objectives and expectations for cultural norms and routines such as (and in particular) morning meetings.

#### *Communication*

Staff members and parent participants shared a perception that communication in its multiple forms is better at Hilltown than other schools with which they had experience. 100% of parents throughout the school agree/strongly agree that our regular curriculum updates are valuable. Parents note and appreciate that curriculum updates have become more consistent over the years. 100% of survey respondents agree/strongly agree that our progress report format is an effective tool. Parents of 6th-8th grade students with disabilities perceive strong communication among their children’s teachers (some teachers perceive a need for improvement in this area).

At the same time, communication was the most commonly listed area of major importance and improvement for the school among parents and staff.

Parents



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- In older grades, multiple parents feel that they don't have enough information about their child's academic and social experience in school. Parents would like occasional communication specific to their child. Parents would like more opportunities to come in and see students share work (or be encouraged to come see specific work posted on the walls). Many parents would like to see increased Portal utilization by teachers to keep progress/grade information updated. Some note being unhappily surprised by progress reports and regretted not knowing there was a problem sooner.
- Several parents perceive that 7th graders leading their own conference in the fall was not effective. Several parents perceived that it was problematic not to have both the ELA teacher and the math teacher at their child's conference. Many parents referenced their appreciation of being able to meet with both the ELA and math teacher at the same time in sixth grade. Some parents would like a spring conference in addition to the fall conference.

#### Staff

- Some staff perceive that, compared to when the school was smaller, fewer decisions are made as a whole staff. More clarity about when decisions are purely administrative, when decisions are wholly collaborative, and when staff input is necessary (but the decision is ultimately administrative) would be helpful.
- Several staff members noted that while Student Support Team meetings are important and beneficial, the school's current master schedule does not allow for all staff who work with a student to be involved in Student Support Team meetings related to that student. Multiple staff members noted that the SST split has made participation by all relevant staff harder.
- Communication around integration has been hampered by the increased demand for multiple meetings. *See section on arts integration.*

#### Students

- Students sometimes feel confused about what they are supposed to do for homework. They observed that the school uses three systems (planner pages, Google Classroom, and a homework blog).

#### *Arts Integration*

With more students, more staff, and more meetings, there has been a cost to the quality of integration at Hilltown. Multiple faculty and parents referred to past projects that were more integrated and robust. 6th-8th grade students engage in projects that integrate different academic subjects, but parents and staff perceive that few are deeply integrated with the arts. Some perceive that the quality of integration at Hilltown is not different from that at other schools where integration is not key to their mission.

#### *Curriculum and Basic Skills*



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Hilltown's 6th-8th graders have continued to meet benchmarks as measured by unit assessments, IOWA tests, and MCAS. The sixth grade, a year of transition into Hilltown, has been characterized by a jump in MCAS scores, contrary to state and national trends in transition years. 8th grade science has been particularly strong as well. Co-curricular activities, including field trips and fundraisers, have become more difficult to organize in recent years (whether this is a function of student numbers or other variables is undetermined).

- Social Studies/Humanities

In 2018, Massachusetts set forth new social studies standards. This is the first year that area 9th grades have implemented the new standards. Going forward, Hilltown will adjust curriculum accordingly.

- ELA

It is time to review the 6th-8th grade ELA curriculum, check for alignment with standards, suitability of literature selections, and opportunities for integration.

- Math

Hilltown's 6th-8th grade math curriculum is up-to-date and standards-aligned. Introduced in 2018, SY20-21 will be the third year of implementation in 6th and 7th grade and the second year of implementation in 8th grade.

- Science

Science in 6th-8th grade is standards aligned, hands-on, and integrated with learning in other discipline areas.

- Spanish

In the fall of 2017, Hilltown chose to offer its foreign language (Spanish) using a research-based method called Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). This method emphasizes speaking and listening for understanding over perfection and utilizes Comprehensible Input (repeating words or phrases up to thirty times in one lesson) to build fluency. Grammar rules are explained as they arise in context. Conjugations are taught two or three pronouns at a time (in the context of a story or dialogue) rather than set forth in isolation to be memorized. In the coming year, this approach to learning Spanish and its fit for Hilltown will be evaluated. While language acquisition is high, some parents and students are not confident that they are ready for Spanish II as 9th graders. Informally, Hilltown graduates report knowing more tenses compared to 9th grade peers and having superior listening comprehension, but not knowing as much vocabulary or grammar rules. Some students report that the repetitive nature of TPRS is not engaging.

- Exploratories

In 2018, Hilltown piloted "Electives" in 7th and 8th grade, which then became "Exploratories" in the fall of 2019. This has been an experiment to see whether offering students some choice and spending intensive blocks of time on a particular special subject (e.g. P.E., music, or Community Service Learning) would improve student engagement. In 2020, this approach to special subjects will be evaluated. Among



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the considerations are the impact on integration and whole-grade learning experiences, periods of time without preferred subjects (mainly P.E.), and how much choice there realistically can be if we maintain a commitment to student participation in all subjects.

- Technology

Best practice in technology is now considered to be a model of integration with technology taught in the service of interdisciplinary pursuits. At Hilltown, Technology is taught as a separate subject. Consider possibilities for deepening integration and the suitability of technology as a stand-alone class. Consider whether stand-alone Technology projects would fit within the frame of Exploratories.

- PE

Hilltown's PE program is standards aligned and considered by parents and students to be a strength in the school. Two co-ed teams, the Running Club (fall, cross-country) and the Ultimate team (spring) have high participation.

- Community Service Learning

For two years, CSL has taken place during Exploratories. This needs to be reviewed for its strengths (relationships with community centers and community projects) and weaknesses (lack of integration).

- Health

The Health curriculum (social thinking, social skills, and social awareness K-3; health 4-8) needs to be updated. This process will begin SY20-21.

- Atelier

*See Integration*

#### Concluding Recommendations:

1. Engage in a school-wide discussion (during SY20-21) with input from all stakeholders, to determine whether a grade level other than Grade 6 should become the stand-alone grade. This should be one central focus of the upcoming Long Range Planning process.

545289312. Engage in a school-wide discussion during SY20-21 to understand what parts of the perceived divide between K-5 and 6-8 are structural/logistical and what parts reflect gaps among attitudes, values, and teachers' prior training/teaching experiences. Align community expectations and practices between K-5 and 6-8. Clarify whole school values and age-appropriate progressions around K-8 elements such as morning meetings and sharing student work.

545288192. Among 6th-8th grade teachers, establish common values and clear expectations around parent communication about individual children and develop a system for parents to access basic information about their child's progress.



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545289088. Revisit and streamline the SST meeting schedule. Part of this process will include considering the costs and benefits of smaller team meetings.

545289256. Engage in a whole-school discussion about integration. Identify the supports and obstacles to robust, collaborative work in this area. Develop our accountability goals to hold ourselves to the standards we want to achieve.

545288248. Set a timeline for conducting a comprehensive review of the Grades 6-8 curriculum to consider overall curriculum, integration, differentiation, Exploratories, and co-curricular activities (e.g. field trips and fundraisers).

545288360. In grades 7-8, support around organization and executive function skills need to become part of Tier I instruction (all students in all classrooms). Schedules need to prioritize teaching time for these areas in all classrooms.

545289424. Evaluate the success/shortcomings of the two-team (East/West) model in the spring of the second year of the cycle (SY21-22).

### III Community and Family

The Parent Satisfaction Survey in 2019 and 2018, the two focus groups and observations by the Director of Community and Family Engagement illustrate an overall positive perception by parents of the expansion of the school and the increase in student population in grades 6-8. Parents commented on the benefits for students of a wider social group and on the skills of the teachers as well as on the curriculum as described above.

When asked specifically about the parent community, there was a desire generally expressed by parents, both long-time and newer, to feel a stronger sense of connection among parents of students in grades 6-8. They felt it was important to find ways to give parents the opportunity to talk with each other about their kids both informally and with structured programs.

- “There are few opportunities for “non-extrovert” Grades 6-8 parents to connect [several long-term parents noted that the loading of the bus for the DC trip was the first time they’d seen many of the other Prisms parents in a long time]”

They also felt that they wanted to more fully integrate incoming parents:

- “New grades 6-7 parents often don’t really know the other parents in anything like the way parents whose kids came through K-5 do



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There was a feeling that after grade 5, parents lose a sense of belonging to the community partly because they are not in the building as much as they used to be - whether that is in classrooms to share in activities or for drop off and pick up.

- The specific issue of inside-the-school pickup in grades K-5 vs. outside pick-up in grades 6-8 came up repeatedly. Multiple parents of students who had gone through the early grades said that while it could be challenging to navigate large numbers of people, when their student got to grade 6 it turned out that they really missed the informal connection with other parents, as well as informal communication with staff, that come through indoor pick-up. They recognized that 6-8 grade students may not want their parents to come in for them, but strongly felt that there is a loss associated with the shift to outside pick-up in grade 6 and wondered if there could be some way to address this gap. Additionally, one parent participant said that long-term parents know to bring their kids in sometimes, while newer parents don't necessarily know that they could benefit by doing so; this parent also stated the belief that volunteering among upper grade parents would increase significantly if there were more regular opportunities for upper grade parents to spend time in the building.

Parents felt a real difference in connection with the classrooms between 5th and 6th grade, continuing into the Prisms. "There is a hard stop on parent involvement at grade 6." and wanted more inclusion, feeling like those kinds of connections would also increase investment and volunteerism.

#### New parents:

While incoming parents appreciated the beginning of the year picnics, the informational meetings and the LINK Families, it was clear that some would appreciate more school involvement in helping incoming parents of Purples and Prisms connect with the continuing parents. Others were clear that the Hilltown parent community was not their "friend" community and that those important relationships had been established before the family came to Hilltown. They did not have the expectation or desire to change that.

#### Fundraising for overnight trips:

Parents had a wide range of responses to this issue. Some would prefer to just donate money rather than spend the time, others thought it was easy or worthwhile to help students understand the expenses of the trips. Better communication around needs/successes and simpler organization would make it easier. Many felt like 2 classroom fundraisers during the year, plus those for the whole school (like Art Spark) was too much.

#### Volunteering:

Parents in grades 6-8 volunteer at school in smaller proportionate numbers than the parents of younger children. Incoming parents often strive to volunteer more than continuing parents, having chosen Hilltown very aware of the parent involvement expected. Some more long-term parents feel disconnected or burnt out and pull back during their final three years at Hilltown. Volunteering or sharing work on a project is





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one way that parents build the sense of school community, though tracking of hours was seen as a challenge. In the older grades, many volunteer hours are devoted specifically to class-based fundraisers, separating those parents from the parents in the rest of the school.

Recommendations:

Create more ways to help parents of students in grades 6-8 connect with each other through structured family and/or parent-only events specifically for their age group along with ways to create opportunities for informal and casual interaction among those parents and encourage more parent to parent communication.

Explore how to include parents more in classrooms in ways not related to fundraising - invitations to more classroom activities, open houses or evening presentations.

Examine the costs of overnight trips and the actual monetary and volunteer fundraising needs to support them. Balance those with the value of the trips and the schools ability to budget for them to determine the future of those trips.

**Appendix B**  
**School Expansion Evaluation**  
**Prisms Student Interviews (2 interviews, same questions)**  
**March, 2020**

Altogether, fifteen 7th and 8th graders (25%) self-selected to participate in interviews about the student community at Hilltown and reflections on the K-8 program. Of the participants, nine had been at Hilltown since they were young and six joined Hilltown in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade. The interviews took place on Zoom.

These questions were designed in collaboration with teachers and students.

1. Describe the social community at Hilltown.
2. What stands out about being an older student at a K-8 school?
3. What is different about being an older student at Hilltown?
4. What leadership role, responsibilities, or privileges are important to you?
5. Who in the school do you go to if you need support?
6. What have been the most meaningful projects and field trips over your time at Hilltown?
7. What suggestions do you have to improve the 6-8 grade experience at Hilltown?
8. Anything else?

Community

- There is a social flexibility that students are grateful for. Social flexibility is supported by group work and group activities.
- Students know each other across social groupings and grade levels.
- *“Popularity is a harder issue at other schools.”*
- Students know each other well and know most people in the school by name or at least class- this is true even for students who started in 6th grade.

Being an Older Student

- Students value being buddies with younger students and having opportunities to connect with younger students through mini-courses and other activities.
- Students’ sense of responsibility is supported by mentoring/buddy roles.
- *“It’s meaningful to grow into things you’ve seen older students do when you were little.”*
- Students think they will miss having younger students around when they go to high school.
- There’s more homework in older grades.
- There are more kids, *“which is good”*.
- *“Students are more familiar with teachers in older grades. Especially TAs. We’ll form a group around TAs.”*
- *“Because of the little kids I feel more responsible with the actions I take.”*

Leadership, Responsibilities, and Privileges

- Student value recess. Some would like to have recess with Purples.
- Prisms value having their own lunches. Some would like to choose where to sit while others think mixing it up keeps social groups from becoming too tight. Some wish they could eat with younger students.

- *“Having been a younger student, the Prisms were super cool and now that puts equal pressure and pride onto my grade.”*
- Mummers play, helping with Winter Fair, helping in mini-courses, and other rights that come with responsibility are meaningful.
- Students are proud to have bigger projects and leadership roles in All School (skits)
- More freedom as you move up the grades

### Support

- Students mention friends first as sources of support in older grades.
- *“If it’s too big for friends, we’ll go to teachers and TAs.”*
- When asked what teachers, students named homeroom teachers only, and some TAs.
- *“Teachers look out for you... are understanding and approachable, compared to in other schools.”*

### Meaningful projects and field trips:

- Overnight trips (Chimney Corners and D.C. stood out equally for different reasons, the former to make new friends and the latter for sense of freedom- no parents)
- Whenever we get to choose something (Ancient Greece, National Parks, 7th grade research, 8th grade projects)
- Experiments in science
- Tempestry

### Suggestions for improvements

- Make it easier to keep track of homework. There’s Google classroom and a blog and some people write things down.
- Do something in the beginning of the year to keep 5th and 6th graders connected.
- Do something to keep 6th and 7th graders connected.

### **Quotes**

*“I came in fourth grade. There was a popularity status at my old school. I didn’t find that so much here.”*

*“There is an idea of the popular kids, but we don’t have enough kids to have a popular group. You end up talking to everyone.”*

*“There aren’t specific friend groups. Well there are, but people branch out from there, so you can be in five friend groups at once.”*

*“I came in sixth grade. You see everyone. I know everyone. You end up talking to everyone.”*

*“People are pretty nice overall and in general.”*

*“Even though we’ve added more students I still know everyone’s name and I know a lot of people on a personal level. It still feels like a small community even though it’s bigger than it used to be.”*

*"We know each other. I [7th grader] have lots of friends in 8th grade. My friends from other schools think it's wild that I am friends with eighth graders. 'You know kids who are in 8th grade???' At their school, there are 400 kids and they don't know half of the people there."*

*"It's easier to meet people at Hilltown. More group time."*

*"When I was new it wasn't that hard for me. People were really nice."*

*"I LOVE being a buddy to younger kids. I love it so much. It's going to be really hard not to have younger kids there next year."*

*"Nice to have more responsibility.."*

*"It's a K-8 school so there are kids you know for a while, over time. We have so many different things- mini courses, lunch rooms, talk with kids you wouldn't normally talk to."*

*"I think I know 90% of the students' names."*

*"One hallway everybody goes up and down it. You kind of see everybody. I didn't know the younger kids but after buddies, I know most of them by now. I mostly know everybody by name. They're an Orange or they're a Red."*

*"Walking down the hall you see people from every grade. Music room and Art room make us go through each other's grades."*

*"We have All School Buddies, reading buddies, lots of interaction with younger kids."*

*"It's better for big kids"*

*"Because of the little kids I feel more responsible with the actions I take."*

*"Teachers make it clear that this is a place to take risks."*

*"Teachers are very understanding and pretty chill about things."*

Hilltown Community Public Charter School  
2020 Evaluation of Grades 6-8 Expansion/School Reorganization  
Focus Group Report  
Paul Hyry-Dermith, Ed.D

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## Hilltown March 2020 Focus Groups Report: Executive Summary

**Process.** As part of Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School's evaluation of the expansion and reorganization of grades 6-8 initiated in its 2013 Long Range Plan, I facilitated five one-hour focus groups in March 2020 using the Zoom video meeting platform. Three of the focus groups consisted of heterogeneously grouped faculty members, one consisted of parents who had had at least one student enter Hilltown in the upper grades (6-8), and one consisted of parents who had had at least one student enter in an earlier grade and continue from grade 5 into grade 6.

Using my notes from each session with recordings for back-up, I identified key themes from participant responses with supporting quotes, then used that data to generate findings and identify potential next steps.

The **findings** integrate both faculty and parent participant perceptions in light of their responses to the questions they were asked, broken down into four categories.

### **Category 1: Overall Perceptions of the Reorganization and its Effect on the School:**

- Staff and parents expressed **great overall satisfaction** with the school, and shared a belief that the **expansion of grades 6-8 has been positive** for both the affected students and the community as a whole.
- Most staff and parents expressed **satisfaction with the balance between, and relationships among, older and younger children at Hilltown**, while some faculty members have **concerns about a perceived "dominance" on the part of the upper grades**.
- Many staff members share a perception that **the proportion of grades 6-8 students with higher individual needs has grown** with the expansion.
- Parents and staff **expressed great pride and appreciation for the school's efforts to provide a hands-on, arts-integrated curriculum**; at the same time, some participants expressed **concerns about the quality of arts integration** in comparison to their memories from the past, and some staff members and parents expressed **broader concerns about curriculum-related matters**.
- Parents broadly shared a perception that their **students are part of an intimate community of learners** (a mission-critical element for Hilltown), while also in some cases expressing **concerns specific to Grades 6-8**.

### **Category 2: Perceptions about the Grades 6-8 Student Experience:**

- Grade 6 is the grade level where the major influx of students new to the school occurs each year, and focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that **the school works hard and does well in welcoming new Grade 6 students**.
- At the same time, parents in particular, and some staff, expressed **concerns about how the school has structured Grade 6** and suggested that a different grade should be the "standalone" grade (the one not paired with any other grade level)
- **With regard to grades 7 and 8, parents and staff also expressed overall satisfaction**, but also expressed **concerns about the division of the grades 7-8 ("the Prisms") into two fairly separate groups, the school's approach to grades 7-8 electives, and in some cases concerns about the overall quality of the grades 7-8 curriculum**.

### **Category 3: Perceptions about Communication and Community among Adults:**

- Both faculty members and parent participants in the focus groups generally **shared a perception that communication in its multiple forms is better at Hilltown than at other schools** with which they had experience. At the same time, **communication was the most commonly listed area of major importance and improvement for the school**.

- Parents expressed general **satisfaction with the communication between the school and families**. At the same time, many parents indicated that they would be willing to have **less general information (about curriculum and activities) in order to have more communication specifically about their own children**.
- When asked about the **degree and quality of community among parents**, parents communicated appreciation and **overall satisfaction**, while expressing **concerns about the degree to which the school builds community among parents at grades 6-8**. Additionally, the specific issue of **inside-the-school pickup in grades K-5 vs. outside pick-up in grades 6-8** came up repeatedly.
- While staff members were nearly unanimous that **communication and community among staff** at Hilltown compares positively to many schools, this was most often identified by faculty members as the most important issue facing the school. In particular, several staff members noted that while **Student Support Team meetings** are important and beneficial, the school's current master schedule does not allow for all staff who work with a student to be involved in Student Support Team meetings related to that student.

**Category 4: Perceptions about Leadership.**

- Staff and parents alike expressed strong appreciation for school leaders, and recognized that expansion of the school has brought new leadership structures and challenges; some staff members consider the school's leadership structure to be more hierarchical than in the school's early days.

***Potential Next Steps Based on Focus Group Findings (noting that these are not "recommendations" but rather steps that the school may consider):***

- Engage in a school-wide discussion during SY20-21, with input from all stakeholders, to **determine whether a grade level other than Grade 6 should become the stand-alone grade level**
- Consider investment in additional staff and/or other resources, or reorganization of existing staff, to **increase individualized (non-academic) supports for grades 6-8 students**
- Engage in a **dialogue and decision-making process about whether to merge the Prisms back into a single group**, and about potential **changes to the grades 7-8 electives/specials process**
- With the completion of this evaluation process and the impending retirement of the Director of Administration, **consider a reorganization of Hilltown's leadership structure**
- Set expectations for a **floor/minimum of individual, student-specific communication from teachers to parents**, and provide technical support for making this communication as efficient as possible for teachers
- School leaders make a substantial effort to **increase opportunities for grades 6-8 parents to connect with and get to know each other**. This will likely involve a trial-and-error process in terms of specific strategies/tactics that will work best for this purpose.
- Review, and **consider reorganizing, the master schedule in order to ensure that all staff who work with a student can be in that student's SST meeting**. This review needs to include consideration of the likely opportunity costs of making such a change (what the current master schedule allows for that will need to be given up)
- **Comprehensive review of the Grades 6-8 curriculum** to consider both overall curriculum quality (rigor, alignment with standards, materials, etc.) and degree and quality of arts integration

**Overview and Focus Group Participants/Process.** As part of its 2013 Long Range Plan, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (“Hilltown”) decided to expand enrollment in grades 6-8. This expansion was implemented over several years and happened in conjunction with several other important developments at the school, including its move to its current facility in Easthampton. The Long Range Plan committed the school to an evaluation of the grades 6-8 reorganization in 2020 in order to review the successes and shortcomings of the expansion, once complete, in terms of the school’s mission, finances, physical capacity, spheres of community, and the academic and social-emotional experience for students.

As part of this evaluation Hilltown hired a consultant, Paul Hyry-Dermith, to carry out focus groups of school faculty and parents/guardians. Five one-hour focus groups were carried out in March 2020 using the Zoom online meeting platform:

- Three for school faculty, who were heterogeneously grouped (essentially randomly assigned; all faculty focus groups included multiple types of teachers (classroom teacher, special educator, support staff) from mixed grade levels (early through upper grades); in total 26 school faculty members participated in focus groups.
- Two for parents/guardians: one group consisted of parents who had had at least one student enter Hilltown in the upper grades (6-8), while the other consisted of parents who had had at least one student enter in an earlier grade and continue from grade 5 into grade 6.<sup>1</sup>

The protocols and questions for each focus group are included as an Attachment to this document. In addition, two school staff members reached out to me (Paul) to share additional thoughts in follow-up to the focus group; and two parents who were unable to participate in the focus group reached out to share thoughts (one by telephone, one by email).

**Analysis.** I took detailed notes during all focus groups, and recorded each session in order to be able to check the record with regard to any unclear notes. I transcribed all my notes for each question and noted each case in which more than one focus group participant made essentially the same comment. I then re-read the notes for all sessions and identified key themes from participant responses, and pasted in individuals’ quotes (from any focus group) that best summed up multiple responses as well as those that expressed what I considered a particularly important point related to that theme. I used that “key themes with quotes” document to generate the findings and potential next steps below. *NB: I would be glad to describe the process in further detail with any Hilltown stakeholder who has questions or concerns.*

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that the two parent focus groups differed significantly in tone. While parents were warm and friendly with each other in both focus groups, in the first (parents of students who had newly joined Hilltown in the upper grades) it was clear that most didn’t know each other, and knew significantly less about other parents overall, than in the second (parents who had had kids start in the lower grades), where the parents were familiar and easy with each other, and readily named a variety of common experiences. It is also worth noting that while all participating parents expressed deep appreciation for the school, the parents in the first (those whose children came to Hilltown in grades 6-8) were particularly clear about their appreciation for the opportunity for their children that Hilltown’s expansion has created.



**Findings.** The findings below are based on the analysis process above, integrating both faculty and parent participant perceptions in light of their responses to the questions they were asked. I have created several broad categories of findings:

1. Overall Perceptions of the Reorganization and its Effect on the School
2. Perceptions about the Grades 6-8 Student Experience
3. Perceptions about Communication and Community among Adults
4. Perceptions about Leadership

**Category 1: Overall Perceptions of the Reorganization and its Effect on the School.**

**Staff and parents expressed great overall satisfaction with the school, and shared a belief that the expansion of grades 6-8 has been positive for both the affected students and the community as a whole.** While participants in all focus groups expressed many thoughts and ideas about how Hilltown could be “even better,” there was near-universal agreement among participating stakeholders that they are quite content with the school overall and believe that the grades 6-8 expansion was beneficial. Another way of stating this is that no focus group participant expressed regret about the school’s decision to expand. Sample quotes in this regard:

- The school is a welcoming community, especially for kids (**multiple parents**)
- Expansion has allowed Hilltown to work with more kids, expand on our mission, and work with kids we wouldn’t have otherwise been able to support (**faculty**)
- It’s great that the school grows in the upper grades in order to increase community access (**multiple faculty and parents**)
- The influx of 6<sup>th</sup> graders helps grades 6-8 feel a little bigger and is invigorating for the kids who have been there, to have new peers and a larger peer group (**multiple parents**)
- Even with the expansion, Hilltown’s size allows for a smaller and safer community than most schools (**parent**)

**Overall, both staff and parents expressed satisfaction with the balance between, and relationships among, older and younger children at Hilltown.** Faculty members in every focus group listed several key structural/curricular components that create positive relationships across the earlier and later grades: the cross-grade buddy system, mini-courses, weekly whole-school assemblies, and major events. And parents identified the relationships among older and younger students as one of the things they most appreciated about the school:

- I love the interaction between older and younger students (**multiple parents**)
- Both my kids came into upper grades; my older one loves the interaction with the younger kids (**parent**)
- The younger kids feel very positively about the big kids—they’re not afraid of them (**faculty**)
- I teach younger kids, and I now no longer know all the kids in our school, but I love having Prisms as buddies to the kids I work with (**faculty**)

**At the same time, some faculty members have concerns about a perceived “dominance” on the part of the upper grades:**

- . . . The earlier grades need to be preparing students for success in grades 7-8. And because of the increasing academic focus in grades 7-8 (associated with the MCAS, preparation for very

academic high school experiences, etc.), it makes the earlier grades more academically focused than we might want them to be **(faculty)**

- Grades 6-8 have become dominant and separate—both in terms of location and in terms of culture **(faculty)**
- In Grade 6 we operate much like a traditional middle school, including not being truly arts-integrated, and my concern is that this is pushing down into the earlier grades **(faculty)**

*There was also a shared perception among many staff members that the **proportion of grades 6-8 students with higher individual needs has grown with the expansion.*** Some identified this with higher proportions of special education students, while others cited a recent report by leadership showing that the proportion of special education students is not higher in the upper grades, but stated beliefs that grades 6-8 have higher proportions of students who need greater amounts of individual support than in the earlier grades:

- The students coming into the school in grade 6 are often moving away from other school settings that didn't work for them, and this includes higher numbers of special education/special needs students who need more resources **(faculty)**
- The numbers of students with psychiatric/mental health challenges in grades 6-8 is higher—the number and range of emotional and learning needs are huge in those grades **(multiple faculty members)**
- Kids who start in grades K-1 are entering grade 6 in a very different way from those entering for the first time in grade 6—those who come in at grade 6 don't always want to buy into the culture (participate in whole school, sing/perform, interact with the younger kids)—perhaps because they didn't have those experiences themselves) **(multiple faculty members)**

*Parents and staff expressed great **pride and appreciation for the school's efforts to provide a hands-on, arts-integrated curriculum:***

- I have been very impressed with the arts integration **(multiple parents)**
- K-5 art is amazing! **(parent)**
- My child loves the performing arts pieces **(parent)**
- The new music teacher is terrific—upper grades music has gotten a lot better with him at the school **(multiple parents)**
- I think the school's work to develop character is very strong **(parent)**
- Regarding integration, Music and Art teachers do a great job collaborating with other teachers **(faculty)**
- Regarding integration, great projects happen, e.g. Humanities newspaper, science/art projects, Music theme integration **(faculty)**

*At the same time, some participants expressed **concerns about the quality of arts integration in comparison to their perceptions/memories from the past:***

- It's hard to achieve the same level of integration in grades 6-8 as compared to before the expansion—there's less time for meeting and common planning specifically around arts integration. Meeting time tends to be taken up by [necessary] academic teacher communication in order to ensure core curriculum integration **(multiple faculty members)**

- There's less integration now than there used to be in the regular curriculum, and projects and products are less robust (**multiple parents**)
- The most important challenge facing our school is maintaining arts integration in spite of the combined challenges of academic press (MCAS) and lack of time for communication and common planning (**multiple faculty members**)
- I wish there were more arts opportunities after school during the week; the only two after school arts opportunities happen on the same day (**parent**)

*And some staff members and parents expressed **broader concerns about curriculum-related matters**:*

- I think we need more consistent expectations across all grades in terms of morning meetings. Most specifically, we need an expectation that all kids in every grade have the chance to greet and connect with each other, not just be greeted by adults (**faculty member**)
- While the expansion is good for social grouping, academically it hasn't allowed for differentiation of curriculum and instruction in grades 6-8; more resources are needed for special needs and academic excellence (**parent**)
- Overall the grades 6-8 curriculum needs a review—it's uneven in terms of quality and rigor of work and projects. My child is often bored by the everyday curriculum (**parent**)

*Parents broadly shared a perception that their **students are part of an intimate community of learners** (a mission-critical element for Hilltown), especially when they compared Hilltown with other schools with which they had experience. At the same time, some expressed concerns specific to Grades 6-8; please see the next section.*

## **Category 2: Perceptions about the Grades 6-8 Student Experience**

*While as noted above parents appreciated the ways in which Hilltown fosters an intimate community of learners, some expressed **challenges in relation to the grades 6-8 experience**. One parent shared a broad perception: "For my children the connections with other kids were really strong at the lower grades, then fell apart at the upper grades—both have felt isolated." Others shared more specific challenges:*

- It can be challenging for new upper-grade students to encounter the hand symbols, songs, etc. that the rest of the kids have been using for many years—it would be good to have a glossary/guide for these things
- Having the Grade 6 camping trip on day 3 was too much for my child (who was new to the school and is a bit of an introvert)—could it be moved to a bit later, even the spring?
- [Agreement with the comment above and] the community service day just the day before (on day 2) threw my child, who can be less kid-oriented than some other kids
- The split of the Prisms when my child was in Grade 8 made it too intimate for them, and now I perceive a split between Grade 8 and Grade 7 (another parent said it was their perception that Grades 7 and 8 are better connected this year than in recent years)

*Grade 6 is the grade level where the major influx of students new to the school occurs each year, and focus group participants overwhelmingly agreed that **the school works hard and does well in welcoming new Grade 6 students:***

- Grade 6 is in a pivotal role, and the team has done a great job (while of course there are challenges and limits) **(faculty)**
- The integration process (in G6) really worked well for my daughter **(parent)**
- The entry process was so well coordinated that my daughter (who entered new in an upper grade) never knew who had/hadn't been there all along **(parent)**

*At the same time, parents in particular, and some staff, expressed **concerns about how the school has structured Grade 6.*** Not only is Grade 6 the grade level where most new students enter each year, but it is also the only grade level at Hilltown that is not paired with another grade for multiple purposes. That is, grades K/1, 2/3, 4/5, and 7/8 are paired for teacher teaming, scheduling, and many student activities, while Grade 6 has no paired grade. As one parent stated (and multiple other parents agreed),

“Starting in Kindergarten, kids are connected across grade levels all the way through—alternating year-by-year connections with the kids who are a year older and a year younger than they are. But with G6 being the standalone grade, their connections, in the sense of shared activities and daily informal interactions, are lost with both the 5<sup>th</sup> graders and the 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Since this is also when the influx of new students happens, the new sixth graders only have meaningful interaction with other sixth graders (and don't have a context for the cross-grade culture of the school up to that point). There is a real need for regular, meaningful interactions with Grade 5 and Grade 7 during Grade 6.”

Other focus group participants expressed related concerns:

- It's good for the Prisms (Grades 7 and 8) that they have their own lunch, but again that isolates Grade 6 from Grade 7 **(parent)**
- I worry that the separation of Grade 6 from Grade 7 leads to some hierarchical behaviors on the part of Prisms when they reach Grade 8, i.e., they see Grade 7 as different and 'lower' **(parent)**
- Overall the transition into Grade 6 classrooms is phenomenal, but the transition into the school as a whole needs a lot of work **(parent)**
- Academically Grade 6 is amazing, but the split with Grades 7-8 is not good **(parent)**
- Grade 6 (the Purples) is the only single-grade team, and it's also the grade into which new students come. Should we consider having a different grade level as the single-grade team? Possibly grade 3, where academic expectations increase with MCAS? **(faculty)**
- Consider changing the stand-alone grade, possibly to grade K, since it's generally easy to facilitate meaningful and loving cross-grade interactions with K children **(parent)**

***With regard to grades 7 and 8, parents and staff also expressed overall satisfaction, especially when they compared Hilltown to other schools with which they had experience. At the same time, both parents and staff expressed concerns about the division of the grades 7-8 (“the Prisms”) into two fairly separate groups.***

- I have strong [negative] feelings about the split of the Prisms into two separate groups. My child has less contact with friends and teachers, meaning that the split simply reduced the peer group

in Grade 7, undoing the positive impact of the expansion in terms of growing the peer group in Grade 6 **(parent)**

- There can be flux and challenges in terms of community within the Prisms, since the communities are so micro **(faculty)**
- The most important issue of concern at Hilltown is the split among the Prisms. Parents weren't involved in the decision, and the school should go back to the larger, more integrated structure **(parent)**

*Participants also expressed concerns about other specific elements of the Grades 7-8 student experience.*

- The most important issue of concern at Hilltown is the Specials ("Electives") in Grades 7 and 8. Earlier grade specials are full of music and art. The Prisms enjoy the Art electives, but Music is basically gone from Prisms specials, and this is a mission-critical gap. The study hall rotation is basically a waste of time, and the community service rotation isn't very good. The choice part of "electives" is good, but a better way is needed to maintain arts integration **(multiple parents)**
- We haven't prioritized time across the whole school in order to ensure meaningful leadership opportunities for all Prism students. While there are leadership opportunities for some Prisms, we don't have them for all **(faculty)**

### **Category 3: Perceptions about Communication and Community among Adults**

*Both faculty members and parent participants in the focus groups generally shared a perception that communication in its multiple forms is better at Hilltown than at other schools with which they had experience. At the same time, communication was the most commonly listed area of major importance and improvement for the school.*

*Parents expressed general **satisfaction with the communication between the school and families.***

- Overall Hilltown is a very parent-friendly school, and communication has been easy **(multiple parents)**
- My child has special needs; the school is extremely responsive, and special education progress reports are great **(parent)**
- Email is the primary means of communication and works well for sharing general information about classes, trips, meetings, etc. **(multiple parents)**
- The (streamlined) weekly newsletter is great **(multiple parents)**
- Pick-up and drop-off work well in terms of allowing for building of relationships for strong communication in the early grades

*At the same time, parents expressed a desire for more individual communication from teachers about their own children. Many indicated that they would be willing to have **less general information (about curriculum and activities) in order to have more communication specifically about their own children,** and some suggested that the school provides, in some instances, more general information than they can effectively manage.*

- I would like to get more personalized/individual feedback about my child **(multiple parents)**
- other than the student-led conference in the fall, I haven't heard much from teacher(s) about my child **(parent)**

- I would like to see the school:
  - Increase Portal utilization by teachers to keep progress/grade information updated
  - Reduce the length of teacher “all class” emails, and maybe move them to google doc updates, in favor of more focus on communication about individual students
  - Develop an annual calendar and system for volunteer requests—too often these requests are one-offs that feel desperate **(parent)**
- Communication is inconsistent among teachers, and sometimes uneven on the part of administration. **(parent)**

*When asked about the degree and quality of community among parents, parents communicated appreciation and overall satisfaction, while expressing concerns about the degree to which the school makes sure to build community among parents at grades 6-8.*

- There are some initial challenges in welcoming new families whose kids are coming in at grade 6—there is a close-knit, thriving community of families and staff, and we need to make sure that we are inclusive **(faculty)**
- New grades 6-7 parents often don’t really know the other parents in anything like the way parents whose kids came through K-5 do **(parent)**
- There are few opportunities for “non-extrovert” Grades 6-8 parents to connect [several long-term parents noted that the loading of the bus for the DC trip was the first time they’d seen many of the other Prisms parents in a long time] **(multiple parents)**
- School staff need to do more to coordinate Grades 6-8 family events, not just suggest to parents that they take responsibility for this **(parent)**
- Incorporate community-building/relationship development among parents into evening events: name tags, welcoming activities, etc.—finding ways to give parents the opportunity to talk with each other about their kids **(multiple parents)**
- Consider a monthly Grade 6 parent open house in classrooms—even if kids “don’t want that” **(parent)**
- Can there be some sort of “family all-school” equivalent specific to Grades 6-8? **(parent)**

*Additionally, the specific issue of inside-the-school pickup in grades K-5 vs. outside pick-up in grades 6-8 came up repeatedly. Multiple parents of students who had gone through the early grades said that while it could be challenging to navigate large numbers of people, when their student got to grade 6 it turned out that they really missed the informal connection with other parents, as well as informal communication with staff, that come through indoor pick-up. They recognized that 6-8 grade students may not want their parents to come in for them, but strongly felt that there is a loss associated with the shift to outside pick-up in grade 6 and wondered if there could be some way to address this gap. Additionally, one parent participant said that long-term parents know to bring their kids in sometimes, while newer parents don’t necessarily know that they could benefit by doing so; this parent also stated the belief that volunteering among upper grade parents would increase significantly if there were more regular opportunities for upper grade parents to spend time in the building.*

In relation to **communication and community among staff**, multiple staff participants in the focus groups stated that Hilltown compared positively to other schools with which they had experienced. One

participant shared the perception that the school's "small size is instrumental in allowing for lots of face-to-face communication, and that people help each other out."

At the same time, staff communication and community was identified as the most important issue facing the school by more faculty members than any other issue. One faculty member remarked, and many others agreed, that "Everything revolves around communication. We can improve it to make the best of our brilliant staff and reduce stress. Another said that "Communication is the biggest struggle since the reorganization." In particular, several staff members noted that while Student Support Team meetings are important and beneficial, the school's current master schedule does not allow for all staff who work with a student to be involved in Student Support Team meetings related to that student.

- Setting time aside for SST and integration helps **(multiple faculty)**
- It really helps to get together [in SST meetings] with providers regarding students, and provides a way of thinking together about individual students **(faculty)**
- The SST split has made participation by all relevant staff harder—specials teachers and support staff no longer in meetings for all of their students, and things can get lost **(multiple faculty)**

#### **Category 4: Perceptions about Leadership.**

*Staff and parents alike expressed strong appreciation for school leaders, at the same time as they recognized that expansion of the school has brought new leadership challenges.*

- [The Director of Teaching and Learning] herself has acknowledged that sometimes she is able to get right back when a parent reaches out, while other times she doesn't have time and isn't as responsive. **(parent)**
- [The Director of Teaching and Learning] has been exceptionally responsive and supportive around arts integration. At the same time, she gets pulled in so many multiple directions that she can't always be in all meetings [about this important part of the curriculum], despite the fact that she is our curriculum leader **(faculty)**
- The impact of growth on school leadership has been huge. We have excellent leaders, and their job is really stressful. The size of the school makes it hard (perhaps impossible) to lead in the ways that some people would like [i.e., with the highly collective decision-making process that distinguished the early days of the school] **(faculty)**
- As the school has grown, the role of administration has changed—we are less collective and more top-down than in the early days of the school **(faculty)**
- The most important issue facing Hilltown is communication around decisions, in light of the more hierarchical structure we have now. Specifically it would be good to get clear and consistent about which decisions will be made by leadership, and which will be shared with all faculty, so that things are more transparent to all and we're also not wasting anyone's time by having input solicited when it's not really going to be used **(faculty)**
- We haven't discussed money. In the past teachers knew how money was spent, how much was available for different purposes, etc. Financial information has been fuzzy and insufficient. How is the school budgeting for the changes we've been going through? **(multiple faculty)**

***Potential Next Steps Based on Focus Group Findings.*** While the focus group process was not in-depth enough in its own right to use as a basis for generating specific recommendations as to what the school “should do,” many of the themes that arose were clear and consistent enough to suggest serious consideration of some specific action steps. These are listed below; the order of presentation does not reflect any belief about the relative importance of any potential action step relative to the others.

*Potential next steps regarding structure and resources:*

- Engage in a school-wide discussion during SY20-21, with input from all stakeholders, to determine whether a grade level other than Grade 6 should become the stand-alone grade level
- Consider investment in additional staff and/or other resources, or reorganization of existing staff, to increase individualized (non-academic) supports for grades 6-8 students
- Engage in a dialogue and decision-making process about whether to merge the Prisms back into a single group, and about potential changes to the electives/specials process
- With the completion of this evaluation process and the impending retirement of the Director of Administration, consider a reorganization of Hilltown’s leadership structure

*Potential next steps regarding communication and community-building:*

- Set expectations for a floor/minimum of individual, student-specific communication from teachers to parents, and provide technical support for making this communication as efficient as possible for teachers
- School leaders make a substantial effort to increase opportunities for grades 6-8 parents to connect with and get to know each other. This will likely involve a trial-and-error process in terms of specific strategies/tactics that will work best for this purpose. Ideally it will include some opportunities for regular informal interconnection among parents that mimics coming into the school for pick-up (if inside pick-up for grades 6-8 students is in fact not feasible)
- Review, and consider reorganizing, the master schedule in order to ensure that all staff who work with a student can be in that student’s SST meeting. This review needs to include consideration of the likely opportunity costs of making such a change (what the current master schedule allows for that will need to be given up)

*Potential next steps regarding curriculum:*

- Comprehensive review of the Grades 6-8 curriculum to consider both overall curriculum quality (rigor, alignment with standards, materials, etc.) and degree and quality of arts integration



APPENDIX: Focus Group Protocols

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School  
Evaluation of Grade 6-8 Reorganization  
Teacher Focus Group Protocol  
March 2020**

*Sessions conducted using the Zoom virtual meeting platform.*

**1. Introduction.** May I record this session?

- a. Thank participants for agreeing to participate in the focus group, and for their time.
- b. Explain the purpose of the focus group: The school decided to expand enrollment in grades 6-8 as part of the Long Range Plan published in 2013. We are coming to the end of this LRP. 2020-2021 is the deadline for a full-scale evaluation of the reorganization of grades 6th-8th. This evaluation will describe the successes and shortcomings of our now-complete expansion in terms of the school's mission, finances, physical capacity, spheres of community, and the academic and social-emotional experience for students. This focus group is an important part of the overall evaluation process.

**2. Establish norms.**

- Turn off your cell phones and other devices if you can
- "I" Statements: only speaking for oneself
- No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view
- Be conscious of airtime, please don't get offended if I intentionally make room for someone who hasn't had a chance to say much yet
- Confidentiality: agreeing not to share anything that any individual in this focus group says in a way that could identify them

**3. Questions**

- a. Opening question (round robin--please be considerate of time, and please listen carefully to each other): Over the past few years your school has been reorganized to support an expansion of the number of students in grades 6-8. When you consider this expansion and reorganization, what thoughts and feelings come to mind? [Jot to self before responding]
- b. Where do you think things currently stand in terms of community among the **students** at Hilltown: where is it strongest, and where is it not as strong? Please think about things like mutual support among students, development of leadership, and relationships across the entire grade span. Please share examples so that we can all understand your thinking. [T-chart]
- c. To what degree is Hilltown effectively facilitating a **hands-on, arts-integrated curriculum** for all of its students? What is going well, and what could be better, in this area?

- d. What aspects of your school and student experience are important to keep **consistent** among all students K-8, and what aspects need to be **differentiated** as students grow older?
- e. Now please think for a moment about community, and communication, among the **staff** here at Hilltown. Please think in particular about communication regarding student services. What are the most significant **strengths**, and what **needs improvement**?
- f. Round robin: Of all the things we have discussed, which to you is the most important?
- g. Again, our goal with this evaluation process is to describe the successes and shortcomings of Hilltown's 6th-8th grade school expansion in terms of the school's mission, finances, physical capacity, spheres of community, and the academic and social-emotional experience for students. With this purpose in mind, have we missed anything? [generate a list without explaining]

*Thank you for your participation in this focus group. Please feel free to email me if you would like to communicate anything that you didn't have a chance to share in this session, and/or that occurs to you later.*

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School  
Evaluation of Grade 6-8 Reorganization  
Parent/Guardian Focus Group Protocol  
March 2020**

*Sessions conducted using the Zoom virtual meeting platform.*

**2. Introduction.** May I record this session?

- a. Thank participants for agreeing to participate in the focus group, and for their time.
- b. Explain the purpose of the focus group: The school decided to expand enrollment in grades 6-8 as part of the Long Range Plan published in 2013. We are coming to the end of this LRP. 2020-2021 is the deadline for a full-scale evaluation of the reorganization of grades 6th-8th. This evaluation will describe the successes and shortcomings of our now-complete expansion in terms of the school's mission, finances, physical capacity, spheres of community, and the academic and social-emotional experience for students. This focus group is an important part of the overall evaluation process.

**2. Establish norms.**

- Turn off your cell phones and other devices if you can
- "I" Statements: only speaking for oneself
- No right or wrong answers, only differing points of view
- Be conscious of airtime, please don't get offended if I intentionally make room for someone who hasn't had a chance to say much yet
- Confidentiality: agreeing not to share anything that any individual in this focus group says in a way that could identify them

**3. Questions.**

- a. Opening question (round robin--please be considerate of time, and please listen carefully to each other): Over the past few years Hilltown has been reorganized to support an expansion of the number of students in grades 6-8. When you consider this expansion and reorganization, what thoughts and feelings come to mind? In particular, what are your perceptions about the balance among younger and older students at Hilltown? *Please share your name, how many kids you have at Hilltown, and their grades before your answer.*
- b. Please describe your perceptions and experiences regarding **communication between your family and the school** in relation to topics such as your child's needs, the school's curriculum, and/or general school information. In what ways is communication working well, and in what ways is it not as strong?
- c. To what degree would you say that your child is part of an **intimate community of learners** at Hilltown? Do you have any suggestions for improving the school in relation to this goal?
- d. To what degree would you say that your child is participating in a **hands-on, arts-oriented curriculum** at Hilltown? Do you have any suggestions for improvement in

relation to this goal?

- e. Now please think for a moment about community, and communication, among **parents and families** here at Hilltown. What are the most significant **strengths**, and what **needs improvement**?
- f. Round robin: Of all the things we have discussed, which to you is the most important?
- g. Again, our goal with this evaluation process is to describe the successes and shortcomings of Hilltown's middle school expansion in terms of the school's mission, finances, physical capacity, spheres of community, and the academic and social-emotional experience for students. With this purpose in mind, have we missed anything?

*Thank you for your participation in this focus group. Please feel free to email me if you would like to communicate anything that you didn't have a chance to share in this session, and/or that occurs to you later.*

## Parent Satisfaction Survey 2020

**Thank you very much for completing this satisfaction survey. This is a survey that we send out each year to help us understand how parents feel about the program here at Hilltown. Your responses will help us greatly as we look forward to the coming year and as we prepare for our next Long Range Plan.**

**Please answer the questions as completely and honestly as you are able. There is a space for comments at the end of each section.**

**Thank you very much for volunteering your time to help our school in this important way.**

### General Information

1. Name (optional, but helpful for follow-up)

\* 2. My children are in the following classes:  
(mark all that apply)

- Indigos
- Blues
- Greens
- Yellows
- Oranges
- Reds
- Purples
- Prisms

\* 3. My family has been at Hilltown for this many years:

- 1
- 2
- 3-5
- 6-10 or more

4. My children began at Hilltown in this/these grades:

- Kindergarten
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth
- Fifth
- Sixth
- Seventh
- Eighth

## New Families

5. Is your family new to Hilltown this year?

- Yes
- No

6. How connected do you feel to the Hilltown parent community?

Not Connected At All

Not Very Connected

Somewhat Connected

Very Connected

7. How connected do you believe your children feel to the Hilltown school community?

Not connected at all

Not very connected

Somewhat connected

Very connected

8. What did you find helpful this year, entering as a new family?

9. What about entering this school was challenging for you?

## Educational Program

**At the bottom of this page, you will have the option of submitting additional responses for additional children (if you would like). For example, if you have a 7th grader and a 2nd grader, you may want to answer these questions differently for each child.**

10. I am filling this out for my child who is in the...

- Blues
- Indigos
- Greens
- Yellows
- Reds
- Oranges
- Purples
- Prisms

11. I am satisfied with the curriculum updates my child's teachers provide via email.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

12. The current format of the HCCPS progress reports helps me understand my child's achievement, strengths, and challenges.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

13. The current format for parent-teacher conferences helps me understand my child's school experience, achievement, strengths and challenges.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

14. If you would like to comment on the last three questions, please use this space.

15. I believe the school succeeds in creating a positive social/emotional environment for students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. I believe that all students at Hilltown are held to equally high standards of behavior.

Strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I believe that my child is engaged by the academics at Hilltown.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. I believe that my child experiences an adequate amount of arts and academic curriculum integration.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. I am satisfied with the quality of cross-age experiences throughout the school.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. If you would like to comment on the last five questions, please use the space below.

21. If you have had a child move from the Reds and Oranges to the Purples, what words come to mind to describe the transition?



22. If you have had a child move from the Purples to the Prisms, what words come to mind to describe the transition?

23. My 4th-8th grader(s) understand their homework assignments (directions, expectations, timeline).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not Applicable

24. My 4th-8th grader(s) completes homework independently at least 80% of the time.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable (e.g. younger grades, child completes homework at school)

25. Comments you would like to share about homework:

26. I am satisfied with the **AMOUNT** of off-campus/field trip experiences my child(ren) have.

I would like more field trips	I am content with the amount of field trips	I would like fewer field trips
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. I am satisfied with the **QUALITY** of off-campus/field trip experiences my child(ren) have.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. For Purples and Prisms parents: please use the space below to share feedback about field trip fundraisers.

29. Would you like to fill out this section (Educational Program) of the survey again on behalf of another child?

Yes

No

Copy of page: Educational Program

**At the bottom of this page, you will have the option of submitting additional responses for additional children (if you would like). For example, if you have a 7th grader and a 2nd grader, you may want to answer these questions differently for each child.**

30. I am filling this out for my child who is in the...

- Blues
- Indigos
- Greens
- Yellows
- Reds
- Oranges
- Purples
- Prisms

31. I am satisfied with the curriculum updates my child's teachers provide via email.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

32. The current format of the HCCPS progress reports helps me understand my child's achievement, strengths, and challenges.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

33. The current format for parent-teacher conferences helps me understand my child's school experience, achievement, strengths and challenges.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

34. If you would like to comment on the last three questions, please use this space.

35. I believe the school succeeds in creating a positive social/emotional environment for students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. I believe that all students at Hilltown are held to equally high standards of behavior.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. I believe that my child is engaged by the academics at Hilltown.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. I believe that my child experiences an adequate amount of arts and academic curriculum integration.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. I am satisfied with the quality of cross-age experiences throughout the school.

strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree	not able to comment
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. If you would like to comment on the last five questions, please use the space below.

41. If you have had a child move from the Reds and Oranges to the Purples, what words come to mind to describe the transition?

42. If you have had a child move from the Purples to the Prisms, what words come to mind to describe the transition?

43. My 4th-8th grader(s) understand their homework assignments (directions, expectations, timeline).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not Applicable

44. My 4th-8th grader(s) completes homework independently at least 80% of the time.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable (e.g. younger grades, child completes homework at school)

45. Comments you would like to share about homework:

46. I am satisfied with the **AMOUNT** of off-campus/field trip experiences my child(ren) have.

I would like more field trips	I am content with the amount of field trips	I would like fewer field trips
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. I am satisfied with the **QUALITY** of off-campus/field trip experiences my child(ren) have.

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. For Purples and Prisms parents: please use the space below to share feedback about field trip fundraisers.

49. Would you like to fill out this section (Educational Program) of the survey again on behalf of another child?

Yes

No

## Cooperative Structure and Administration

50. I am content with my understanding of the school's governance and management structures.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

51. The newsletter, e-mail notices and the mailboxes create a good communication system within the school.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

52. The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

53. I feel that the school is sensitive to issues of race, class, gender, ability, and sexual identity.

	strongly disagree	disagree	neither	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you like to comment on any particular equity area?

54. So far, this year I have volunteered at Hilltown:

- over 30 hours
- 15-30 hours
- 1-15 hours
- Have not volunteered yet this year

55. The following are important to my feeling *personally* engaged and connected at Hilltown. Please select all that apply.

- Feeling a personal connection with other parents
- Feeling a personal connection with my child's teachers
- Feeling a personal connection with the Directors
- Regular communication from the school - Newsletter, emails, portal notices etc.
- Regular classroom updates from teachers
- Being in the school or classroom during school hours
- Participating in school / family events outside of regular hours
- Involvement in committees, school governance and decision-making
- Having many ways to volunteer and plug in
- I do not feel very personally engaged or connected to Hilltown
- Other (please specify)

56. Please add any comments you have on this section.

## Budget, Facilities and other Resources

57. Regarding communication about the school's budget and finances, I feel

- content with how much I know
- I would like to know more

58. Please add any comments you have regarding this section

## Open-ended Questions

**This is the last page of the survey - thank you so much for taking the time to respond.**

**If you have any specific feedback about any of the Directors, please e-mail it to a member of the Board of Trustee's Supervisory Team:**

**President, Tim Reynolds: [treynolds@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:treynolds@hilltowncharter.org)**

**Vice President, Matt Dube: [mdube@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:mdube@hilltowncharter.org)**

59. Do you have suggestions about what would make the school a better place for you and your children?

60. Is there anything else you would like us to know?

61. If you are interested in having a follow-up conversation, please check here and be sure you have given us your name at the top of the survey. You may also schedule a time to meet with Deirdre Arthen, Director of Community and Family Engagement, ([darthen@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:darthen@hilltowncharter.org)).

Yes, I'd welcome a follow up conversation

**FY 21 HCCPS Budget - Working Draft**

Assumptions: No Tuition increase, Static Grants

Salary Freezes, 8% Health Insurance

2% Inflation, no interns, current staffing, S.E. Team Leader

		FY 20	FY 21
		BOT Appvd updates	Draft w/Freezes
		2/12/2020	5/7/2020
	<b>INCOME</b>		
	1 State Per Pupil Tuition	3,034,241	<b>3,027,185</b>
	2 Grants- Mass DOE SPED 240	36,957	36,957
	3 Grants- Mass DOE Title Iva	10,000	10,000
	4 Grants- Mass DOE 140, Title II,A	3,869	3,869
	5 Grants- Mass DOE Title I 305	18,770	18,770
5a	Title I Supplemental - COVID 19		14,000
	6 Grants- MASS DOE 262	647	647
	7 Community Foundation Grants	795	0
	8 FOH Playground Upgrade Grant	0	0
	9 Friends of HCCPS Rolling Arts Grants	0	0
	10 Field Trip Fund	5,150	<b>6,540</b>
	<b>11 Fundraising - FOH Designated Funds</b>	20,000	<b>15,000</b>
	12 Kids Club Income	90,000	<b>60,000</b>
	13 Student Activity Fees- sports, music	35,000	<b>12,500</b>
	14 Medicaid/SPED Income	25,000	15,000
	15 Misc Income	3,500	<b>2,000</b>
	16 Interest income	7,500	<b>5,000</b>
	17 School Lunch receipts	15,000	15,000
	18 Special Field Trip Fundraising	45,000	<b>0</b>
	19 Winter Fair	6,559	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,357,988</b>	<b>3,242,468</b>
	<b>EXPENSES</b>		
	<b>Personnel</b>		
	20 Teachers - S/L, PE	1,304,909	<b>1,310,569</b>
	21 Teaching Assistants- (classrooms)	257,209	<b>263,173</b>
	22 Graduate Interns x1 (FY20)	10,000	0
	23 Kids Club Coordinator/Admin Support	32,550	<b>32,550</b>
	24 Kids Club staff	31,197	<b>15,315</b>
	25 Substitutes	14,000	14,000
	26 Director of Administration- 1fte	97,501	<b>97,501</b>
	27 Director of Teaching and Learning-1 fte	97,501	<b>97,501</b>
	28 Director of Family and Community Engagement-.6 fte	43,876	<b>43,876</b>
	29 Student Services Coordinator- 1 fte	72,168	<b>0</b>
29a	SPED Team Leader - .5 FTE		<b>32,804</b>
	30 Administrative Assistant- 1fte	49,770	<b>49,770</b>
	31 Bookkeeper/Purchasing agent-.8 fte	49,140	<b>49,140</b>
	32 Nurse/Health Educator - 1.0 FTE	60,707	<b>58,207</b>
	33 Counselor- 1 fte	65,607	<b>65,607</b>
	33a Occupational Therapist - .5 fte	32,804	<b>32,804</b>
	34 Tech Teacher/Coordinator 1 fte	51,162	<b>51,162</b>
	35 CSL / Program Support	28,586	<b>28,586</b>
	36 Stipends- student activites (dance, mini)	7,000	5,000
	37 Stipends-program	10,000	10,000
	38 Longevity Pay	11,775	11,775
	<b>39 Payroll subtotal</b>	<b>2,327,461</b>	<b>2,269,339</b>
	40 Medicare- everyone-.0145	33,748	<b>32,905</b>
	41 FICA- non MTRS-.062	40,732	<b>39,218</b>
	42 SUTA-.001- everyone	2,327	<b>2,269</b>
	43 UHIC-.0048 everyone/capped @ 1st 14,000 (change 2019 to .34)	3,226	<b>2,285</b>
43a	PFML Tax	12,000	<b>15,000</b>
	44 Health Insurance	240,000	<b>259,200</b>
	45 HRA	52,000	52,000



46	Health Diversion Benefit					25,000	25,000
47	Workers Compensation					15,143	16,000
48	College Credit Reimbursement					1,000	1,000
	<b>Total Personnel Costs</b>					2,752,637	2,714,217
	<b>Consultants and Outside Services</b>						
49	Accounting Consultant					0	0
50	Administrative Data Management System					6,800	6,936
51	Auditor					8,300	8,466
52	Child Care Services					400	400
53	Curriculum Consultants					2,000	2,040
54	FOH Designated Artist in Residence					2,000	2,040
55	FSA/HRA Administrative Cost					2,200	2,244
56	Legal Fees					5,200	3,600
57	Payroll Service					3,060	3,121
58	<b>Prisms Electives - FOH Designated</b>					3,000	3,000
58a	Professional Development - FOH Designated					10,000	10,000
59	SPED Advisor					2,000	1,000
60	SPED Contractors - PT, psychologist					50,000	40,000
61	Summer SPED services					5,500	5,500
	<b>subtotal</b>					100,460	88,347
	<b>Occupancy</b>						
62	Cleaning Services					50,000	51,000
63	Copier Rental					5,300	5,300
64	Copier Service Contract					3,060	3,121
65	Electric					30,000	24,000
66	Elevator Maint					3,284	3,350
67	Fire/Sprinkler Alarm Services					2,000	2,040
68	Heat					6,500	6,630
69	HVAC Maint					9,500	9,690
70	Insurance					27,168	27,711
71	Interest Expense USDA					93,117	91,629
72	Internet					1,500	1,530
73	Landscaping					8,000	8,160
74	Minor Repair/Maintenance					30,000	30,600
75	Plowing					7,650	7,803
76	Telephone					1,224	1,248
77	Trash Removal					4,000	4,080
78	Water Sewer Fees					3,000	3,060
	<b>subtotal</b>					285,303	280,952
	<b>Supplies</b>						
79	Educational Supplies					22,875	23,333
80	Food					728	743
81	Household Supplies					6,500	6,630
82	Office Supplies					3,641	3,714
83	Playground supplies					875	893
84	Postage					1,000	1,020
85	Printing					624	636
86	Testing/Evaluation Supplies					3,876	6,000
	<b>sub total</b>					40,119	42,968
	<b>Equipment</b>						
87	<b>Chromebook Replacement</b>					10,000	0
88	<b>Furnishings</b>					4,000	4,080
89	Minor Equipment<\$500 ,					2,000	2,040
90	SPED Equipment					3,000	3,060
91	Tech Repair/Replacement					7,000	7,140
92	Vehicle Expenses					1,000	1,020

	<b>subtotal</b>							27,000		17,340
	<b>Grant Funded Expenses</b>									
93	Community Foundation Grants							795		0
94	FOH Playground Upgrade Grant							0		0
95	Friends of HCCPS Rolling Arts Grants							0		0
	<b>subtotal</b>							795		0
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>									
96	Advertising							1,530		1,530
97	BOT Discretionary Fund							500		500
98	Community Domain Expenses							3,000		3,000
99	Community Service Projects - FOH Designated							1,500		1,500
100	Coordinator's Discretionary Fund							2,500		2,500
101	Field Trips							5,150		6,540
102	Fundraising Expenses							2,500		2,500
103	Graduation Expenses							1,020		1,020
104	Kids Club Program Expenses							5,000		5,000
105	MCPSA Dues (.2% of state tuition dollars)							6,068		6,054
106	Miscellaneous							1,020		1,020
107	School lunch expense							20,000		20,000
108	Special 6-8th grade Trip Expenses							55,000		0
109	SPED Contingency							0		10,000
110	Medical Contingency									25,000
111	Student Activity Expenses ( dances, sports, sleepover)							17,000		15,000
112	Student Activity Expenses ( dances, sports, sleepover) - FOH Desig.							3,500		0
113	Travel							510		510
	<b>subtotal</b>							125,798		101,674
114	<b>Total operating expenses</b>							3,332,112		3,245,499
115	<b>Over/Under</b>							25,876		-3,031
116	<b>Non-cash liability-depreciation</b>							104,388		107,375
117	<b>Principal payment from Fund Balance</b>							53,427		54,915



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Council Minutes – April 24, 2020, 11:00am

<https://zoom.us/j/325123002>

**Present:** Tim Reynolds, Matt Dube, Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen

**Regrets:**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<b>Remote Learning</b>	Schools in Massachusetts are all closed for the remainder of the academic year.	
<b>School reopening</b>	DESE is considering a range of options for what might be required when school reopens in the fall. Directors are consulting with staff, including the nursing staff, about what may be needed when the school opens again.	
<b>Staff Update</b>	Nurse Deb will be retiring and Nurse Mary will take over as the full-time nurse for 20-21.	
<b>Director Search</b>	Kate Saccento was offered and accepted the position of Director of Administration.	Directors and staff will meet with Kate in order to form a team to support her successful transition.
<b>20-21 Schedule</b>	Dan presented an initial 20-21 schedule. First day of school will be September 2.	A complete schedule will be brought to the board in May.
<b>Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting</b>	Board of Trustees agenda Budget	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	May 1, 2020 10:00am <a href="https://zoom.us/j/325123002">https://zoom.us/j/325123002</a>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	11:45am	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Council Minutes – May 8, 2020, 10:00am

<https://zoom.us/j/325123002>

**Present:** Tim Reynolds, Matt Dube, Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen

**Regrets:**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<b>BoT Agenda</b>	Set the final agenda for the May board meeting	Dan will send the agenda to Nicole and Noelle.
<b>Budget</b>	Dan presented a preliminary budget for the board to review at the May meeting.	Dan will send the budget to Nicole and Noelle for discussion at the May meeting.
<b>School Expansion Review</b>	Lara presented a summary of the findings.	Full Report will be included in the May board packet.
<b>Additional Chromebook Purchase</b>	The school will be purchasing additional Chromebooks to make sure that each student in grades 4-8 will have their own.	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	May 29, 2020 10:00a <a href="https://zoom.us/j/325123002">https://zoom.us/j/325123002</a>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	11:30am	



**GABS Committee Meeting Minutes – April 29, 2020**

**Meeting Location: By Zoom**

**Present:** Deirdre Arthern; Paula Ingram; Noelle Barrist Stern

**Regrets:** None

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<b>Follow Up on Old Business</b>	Amy Reesman has gone through the BOT meeting minutes for FY16, FY17, and FY18 and is working on FY19. She also plans to look at FY15. She is identifying policies approved by the BOT during those years and making sure they are saved in the BOT Google Drive. She also identified several documents from FY20 that are not on the web site.	Noelle will follow up with Grace about the documents missing from the web site for FY20.
<b>Annual Meeting</b>	We will have an Annual Meeting the beginning of June. Each Committee will need to do a summary report of the Committee’s work. The BOT President will need to write a letter. We will also do a statement that there are no by-law changes. At the meeting, we would vote in the new slate of potential BOT members. We will need to get the materials distributed two weeks before the meeting.	Noelle will ask that this be included in the May BOT agenda.
<b>BOT Recruitment</b>	Andy Tilbe is interested in joining the BOT. Rich has reached out to him. Chris Korczak is also interested in joining. Deirdre has Chris’s interest form and he is planning to attend the next BOT meeting. Karen Sise will be speaking with Sara Schieffelin about joining.	Noelle will call Chris to discuss the BOT role and confirm that he will attend the May BOT meeting. Deirdre will email Andy and Sara the



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		<p>BOT interest form. Noelle will email Andy and tell him to look out for the form, confirm that he is attending the May BOT meeting, and ask if he has any questions. Noelle will follow up with Karen about her communication with Sara.</p>
<p><b>BOT Roles for Next Year</b></p>	<p>We do not know if Joe Wyman and Liz Preston will serve another term. There was a discussion about BOT roles for next year. There will be staff openings on the Personnel and Finance Committees. Deirdre proposed that the Committee Interest Form be sent to the staff in the Friday Notes.</p>	<p>Noelle will email Joe and Liz and ask for a firm decision. Noelle will talk to Dawn Reesman about her thoughts on BOT roles for next year. Deirdre will put a note from GABS in the Friday Notes to see if teachers are interested in joining the Personnel and Finance Committees. Deirdre will create a Google Form that Noelle will email to BOT members and ask what roles they would be interested in serving next year. Noelle will ask that BOT roles be put on the May BOT agenda.</p>



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<b>Review Action Items</b>	Action items reviewed.	
<b>Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting</b>	(1) Board recruitment (2) BOT roles for next year (3) Update about documents in the Google Drive	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	May 12, 2020 at 4:45 p.m. at HCCPS by Zoom	
<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 5:38 p.m.	



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Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes- April 22, 2020

7:30 am Zoom link:

**Present:** Nicole Grinaski, Gaby Blaustein, Kelly Woods, Dawn Reesman, Lara Ramsey

**Regrets:** Liz Preston

Topic	Discussion	Action
Revisiting Personnel Committee Goals		
1) Increasing and supporting staff diversity	<p>Work on developing a strategy to increase and support staff diversity</p> <p>Bring internal/external hiring policy to teacher meeting and invite teachers/staff to let a Personnel Committee know their thoughts</p> <p>As part of strategy, encourage GABS to seek diversity in new board members</p> <p>As part of strategy, encourage Board to pilot an Equity Committee in new LRP</p> <p>We will all browse internet for personnel policies that increase and support staff diversity</p>	<p>We will all browse internet for personnel policies that increase and support staff diversity</p> <p>Gaby will bring internal/external hiring policy to teacher meeting and invite teachers/staff to let a Personnel Committee member know their thoughts</p>
2) Complete Benefit Document	<p>Beyond telling just the facts, include the story- "We are highly competitive"</p> <p>Add "stipends are occasionally available</p> <p>Add PD days</p> <p>Add continuing education</p> <p>TAs</p> <p>Folder should have calendar, onboarding paperwork, phone extension list, org chart, benefit explanation w. contact info</p> <p>Phone #s</p> <p>Orientation tour list</p>	<p>Nicole will ask recent hires from a variety of positions, When you were new, what did you get that was beneficial? What did you need more of?</p> <p>Nicole will start list for onboarding folder.</p>





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	<p>Library?</p> <p>Could ask Meghan Murphy what she would have liked to know? What did you get that was beneficial? What did you need more of?</p>	
<p>Gaby stepping down at the end of this year.</p>	<p>We are all grateful for Gaby's honorable work on the Personnel Committee over the last three years.</p> <p>Discussion of recruitment of a new personnel member</p>	<p>Gaby will announce at next teacher meeting</p>
<p>Discussion of questions about processes for Domain Council</p>	<p>What is the process for Board recruitment? What is the process for committee succession planning? What will the chair roles be next year? Our committee needs clarification.</p>	<p>In Domain Council, Lara will ask for clarification on where we stand on Board recruitment and succession-what is the process? Our committee needs clarification.</p> <p>Clarify committee succession planning.</p> <p>Also, can Lara ask, in Domani Council, for an agenda item re: Board positions next year.</p> <p>Reminder to DC to create document explaining admin salary recommendations.</p>
<p>Review action items</p>		<p>Done</p>
<p>Tentative agenda topics for next meeting</p>		<p>Committee Goals #1 and #2 New PC members</p>
<p>Next meeting time/date/location</p>	<p>Tuesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 7:30 a.m.</p>	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:15	
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## Hilltown's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Annual Report- May 2020

*Hilltown's Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) continued their outreach efforts this school year to Hilltown families whose children have Individualized Education Plans/IEPs and/or 504's. Kate Saccento, Student Services Coordinator, and Gillian Fahmy and Cindy Mahoney, SEPAC co-chairs, met at the beginning of the school year to brainstorm ideas for SEPAC. Each week, we sent out a newsletter highlighting area events or articles that may be of interest for parents of children with Special Needs.*

*Hilltown's first SEPAC meeting of the year was hosting one of the weekly Parent Coffees in early September. We co-hosted another coffee with Oranges parents in December.*

*The first Hilltown SEPAC evening meeting of the year was actually encouraging parents to attend a screening of the film "Angst, Raising Awareness around Anxiety" shown by Hatfield Heads Up on Sept 25.*

*Kay Saakvitne spoke at Hilltown the evening of February 25, 2020 about Dr. Nadine Burke Harris' work on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE).*

*This year Hilltown's SEPAC joined MassPAC, an affiliation of the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN). As a member of MassPAC, Hilltown was entitled to a free training provided by FCSN. The FCSN training on Basic Rights: Evaluation and Eligibility was to be held on Wednesday, March 18, 2020, five days after school buildings were closed due to Covid-19. We will re-schedule when school buildings re-open.*