

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 6:30 pm

Location: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School, 1 Industrial Drive, Easthampton, MA

- Present:** Tim Reynolds, Lara Ramsey, Dan Klatz, Joe Wyman, Noelle Barrist Stern, Deirdre Arthen, Liz Preston, Kelly Woods, Rich Senecal, Dawn Reesman, Matt Dube, Karen Sise
- Regrets:** Paula Ingram
- Facilitator:** Tim
- Notetaker:** Noelle
- Guests:** Kate Saccento; Gina Wyman
- List keeper:** Deirdre
- Timekeeper:** Matt
- Mission statement read by:** Noelle

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<p><b>Announcements/ Appreciations/ Acknowledgements</b></p>	<p><u>Announcements:</u></p> <p>Dan announced that an email had gone out to families addressing the steps the school is taking to limit exposure to Coronavirus. He addressed the cancellation of public school events such as Art Spark and Grandparents’ Day. He also addressed how any school closure would affect the last day of school based on guidance from DESE.</p> <p>Lara suggested that we move the date of our next BOT meeting from April 8th, because it is Passover. Lara also suggested that we might want to try to meet remotely through ZOOM. A question was raised about whether this would comply with the OML.</p> <p><u>Appreciations/Acknowledgements:</u></p> <p>Tim acknowledged the difficult decision that Friends of Hilltown and the Directors had to make in postponing Art Spark and for the thoughtfulness that went into that decision.</p>	

<b>Any thank you notes needed?</b>	A thank you note is needed for Friends of Hilltown for all of the work they did to prepare for Art Spark.	
<b>BOT Visibility this month?</b>	None	
<b>Minutes</b>	Noelle noted that the tentative agenda topics at the end of the draft February minutes referenced the next meeting date as February 12, 2020. It should be March 11, 2020.	Tim moved to approve the minutes with that edit; Dawn seconded; the BOT approved the minutes, as amended, by consensus.
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	None	
<b>Hiring Committee (Tim)</b>	We have received one internal candidate to date. Gina has volunteered to be a staff member on the committee. Tim is hoping that the committee will be finalized by the end of this week and they can start working on interview questions next week. Dan noted that these meetings could be done remotely. Matt thanked Gina for volunteering.	
<b>School Expansion Review (Lara and Dan)</b>	Dan discussed the <i>Student Profile 2013-2020</i> handout. The handout summarized how the student profile did or did not change following the expansion. The data showed that the number of students on IEPs fluctuates from year to year in a way that is not necessarily connected to the expansion. It looks like we are attracting a profile of students that is very similar to the students who had been here prior to the expansion. Applications for the 6th-8th grade spots has been consistently strong. Over the last few years, there has been a decrease. It looks like that is because there are fewer overall spots available in the grades where the school previously was expanding. Dan concluded that demand remains strong and there is no reason to question our ability to fill HCCPS with 218 students.	

	<p>On the teaching and learning domain, Lara reported that she has been working with the consultant to refine questions for the teacher, parent, and student interviews. They are going to interview parents who started at HCCPS in 6th-8th grade one night. On another night, they will interview parents who have children in those grades, but whose children started at HCCPS in earlier years. They are also going to have interviews with parents from diverse families. There are currently eight questions; they are trying to narrow them down to five. Lara shared some draft questions.</p>	
<p><b>Overview of Budget Process (Dan)</b></p>	<p>Dan distributed a handout called <i>HCCPS Annual Budget Process and Financial Oversight Timeline</i>. Deirdre suggested that Dan provide a digital copy so that it can be made available to the BOT going forward. Dan went through the budget process timeline laid out in the handout.</p>	<p>Noelle will follow up with Dan to get a digital copy of the Budget Process handout and make it part of the Google Drive materials available to the BOT.</p>
<p><b>Board Recruitment (Deirdre and Noelle)</b></p>	<p>Noelle reported that two people had previously expressed interest in joining the BOT, but have been unable to attend a BOT meeting. Deirdre reported that they may now be unavailable. Noelle went through each BOT member’s current term and asked for suggestions for people who might be interested in joining the BOT. Karen suggested Sara Schieffelin.</p>	<p>GABS will reach out to Sara Schieffelin.</p>
<p><b>New LRP Process (Tim, Dan, and Deirdre)</b></p>	<p>Dan and Deirdre discussed how the prior LRP Committee operated. Dan noted that it is a very time-consuming process and involves a lot of big-picture thinking. He suggested that the committee be put together in the spring and be able to have a summer retreat, rather than being rushed. Deirdre suggested that it is important to decide how the committee will be facilitated. She encouraged the BOT to think about having someone facilitate who has experience and suggested that the BOT think about this when determining the composition of the group. Karen pointed out that it would be helpful to have a</p>	<p>BOT members will email Tim the names of people in the HCCPS community who might have the background and interest in serving on the LRP Committee. BOT members who are interested in serving also will notify Tim.</p>

	<p>facilitator who is not part of the group; it is hard to both facilitate and give suggestions, because it sways the group. BOT members noted that the BOT had addressed at a prior meeting the issues it wanted the LRP Committee to examine. Deirdre suggested Amy Reesman for the committee. Karen said she would be interested in participating. Lara said that we should think of someone to whom BOT members can send suggestions. Tim volunteered to collect names. Rich suggested sending an email to parents and guardians soliciting participants.</p>	
<p><b>Personnel Update (Lara)</b></p>	<p>Lara distributed a draft <i>Transparent Practice Regarding Salary Recommendations</i>. She suggested that it be included in the materials available to BOT members. She asked that the BOT review it and give feedback. Tim clarified that this is a Personnel Committee practice, not a school policy, so it does not need to be voted on by the BOT. Dan clarified that the BOT has approved this as a policy and this document is just an explanation for the reasoning of how the policy works. Deirdre noted that the draft should be amended to specify that this is for teachers and paraprofessionals. Lara will include this revision and explain how course corrections work.</p>	<p>The Personnel Committee will revise the document and put it on the agenda for the next BOT meeting.</p>
<p><b>New Business</b></p>	<p>Tim proposed that we move the next BOT meeting to April 15, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Lara noted that Bella Price’s parents donated \$1,700 to start a Prisms library. The BOT will send a thank you card.</p>	<p>Tim moved to move the next BOT meeting to April 15, 2020 at 6:30; Kelly seconded; the BOT approved the move by consensus.</p>
<p><b>Committee Reports - Questions only</b></p>	<p>Tim noted that the March 5, 2020 Domain Council minutes were not in the BOT packet.</p>	<p>Noelle will follow up with Nicole about the Domain Council minutes.</p>

<b>Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation</b>	Next Meeting: April 15, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Tim Snacks: N/A Drinks: Newsletter blurb: Joe	
<b>Review Action Items</b>	Reviewed action items.	
<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.	

**Tentative Agenda Topics for April 15, 2020 Board Meeting:**

Revised Personnel proposal  
Salary proposal  
Hiring committee update  
Board Recruitment



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**Teacher and Paraprofessional Salary Recommendation Protocol**  
**Personnel Committee**  
**Draft- circulated to Board for feedback**  
**3/11/20**

**Personnel Committee Proposal to the Board to Trustees April 15, 2020**  
**Priority Level: High**  
**Approximate time needed for discussion: 15**  
**Proposal to be presented by: Kelly**

**Text of proposal:**

Every three years, the Personnel Committee researches the teacher and paraprofessional salary scales at comparable schools and recommends adjustments for Hilltown. Recommendations are then sent through the budgeting process. A cycle of reviewing salaries every three years allows staff to look ahead while also offering opportunities to “course correct” at regular intervals. If necessary, a course correction could be paced over a three year period.

Schools are considered comparable when they are similar in size or close in proximity. *In 2019, we included Bachelors and Masters scales from Westhampton, Hatfield, Williamsburg, Hadley and Chesterfield-Goshen because they are similar in size and from neighboring areas. We included Four Rivers because it is a charter school in our area that has the same number of students we do. We included Easthampton Public Schools and Northampton Public Schools because of proximity and because they are our two largest sending districts.*

Our goal is to be within 90%-110% of median salaries. This range describes the school’s intention numerically: we want to be attractive to teachers and staff, and we need to be flexible as our school finances depend on income from a variety of districts.

Why median and not average? If we used averages as data points for calibrating our salaries, we would be unduly influenced by outliers. Using the median assures that we are calibrating our salaries in comparison to the middle of the pack.

1 Industrial Parkway Easthampton, MA 01027	Phone: 413-529-7178 Fax: 413-527-1530	website: <a href="http://www.hilltowncharter.org">www.hilltowncharter.org</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@hilltowncharter.org">info@hilltowncharter.org</a>



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How do we make sure that everyone gets an equal raise, and not an equal *percent* raise? We adjust Step 1 and Step 12 salaries to where we want them to be and then prorate the change by dividing the difference between Step 1 and Step 12 by eleven. One-eleventh of the difference is added to each step. This approach avoids creating larger step increases at the top of the salary scale and smaller step increases at the bottom of the salary scale.

**Goals to be achieved by the proposal:** To provide guidelines for equitable salary increases that are 1) consistent with salaries in the region; 2) attractive to new hires and fair to existing staff, and 3) flexible enough to be responsive to the finances of the school.

**Potential problems/dissenting views:**

- Sustainability
- Bear in mind that scales of other schools have invisible internal systems, such as not hiring teachers above a certain step or spending different amounts of time on certain steps.

**Additional notes:**

1 Industrial Parkway Easthampton, MA 01027	Phone: 413-529-7178 Fax: 413-527-1530	website: <a href="http://www.hilltowncharter.org">www.hilltowncharter.org</a> e-mail: <a href="mailto:info@hilltowncharter.org">info@hilltowncharter.org</a>



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

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SUZANNE M. BUMP, ESQ.  
AUDITOR

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April 7, 2020

Daniel Klatz, Director of Administration  
Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School  
1 Industrial Way  
Easthampton, MA 01027

Dear Mr. Klatz:

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has received your charter school's fiscal years 2017 and 2018 independent audit reports, dated October 25, 2017 and October 18, 2018, respectively that were submitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 71, Section 89, of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Chapter 71, Section 89, of the General Laws, which contains specific auditing and accounting requirements for Massachusetts charter schools, states, in part,

*Each charter school shall keep an accurate account of all its activities and all its receipts and expenditures and shall annually cause an independent audit to be made of its accounts. Such audit shall be filed annually on or before January 1 with the department [of education] and the state auditor and shall be in a form prescribed by the state auditor. The state auditor may investigate the budget and finances of charter schools and their financial dealings, transactions and relationships, and shall have the power to examine the records of charter schools and to prescribe methods of accounting and the rendering of periodic reports.*

Regulations promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) require that charter schools maintain their records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that annual audits be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAS). In accordance with OSA recommendations, DESE regulations also require that a copy of any management letter by the school's independent auditor be included with the annual audit report that is to be filed with both DESE and the OSA.

Our review of your fiscal years 2017 and 2018 independent audit reports completed by Richard Abbott, CPA found that the reports comply with audit reporting standards required by GAS.



Should you have any questions, please contact me at [Richard.Giovino@sao.state.ma.us](mailto:Richard.Giovino@sao.state.ma.us). In addition, please send your current fiscal year and all future years audit report packages to Kimberly Stanley, Audit Planning Manager, at [Kimberly.Stanley@sao.state.ma.us](mailto:Kimberly.Stanley@sao.state.ma.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Giovino". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Richard M. Giovino  
Audit Support Manager



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## **Domain Directors Report to the Board of Trustees April, 2020**

1. Remote learning plans have been sent to all families. Teachers are offering 90 minutes of real-time interaction per day plus opportunities for group check-ins such as morning meetings, book groups, math help sessions, science talks, Atelier lessons, or clubs. Technologies being used include Google classroom, Zoom, and Flipgrid. Students are strongly encouraged to participate but not penalized if they are unable to join.
2. Our technology survey found that all students have some access to internet, though the quality is not always high and devices sometimes need to be shared. School sent out a letter inviting families to apply to borrow a Chromebook from the school if necessary, and eight families wrote back so far. Our computer loan agreements have been updated as of early March.
3. All contracted staff members have continued to receive their salaries and benefits during this period of extended school closure. Outside contractors who are not providing services are not being paid, and we are not paying Teaching Assistants for the additional hours they work in Kids' Club as we have lost the income from that program.
4. The financial picture for next year is very uncertain. The Charter School Association is recommending that schools budget very conservatively, and we expect the full picture will not be clear by the end of the current fiscal year. An initial budget will be shared at the May meeting, based on the best available information at that time.
5. Easthampton Public Schools are suspending April vacation this year. As we are following their calendar, we have done the same. The reasons for this decision are that students and teachers are just now adjusting to the remote learning plan and suspending the break keeps the momentum moving forward. The last day for the 2019-2020 school year is now Thursday, June 18.



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6. The Crisis Team (Dan, Deirdre, Lara, Mary, Deb and Emilie) is paying attention to the needs of families and students during this time away from the building. We have created document with every child's name sorted by class, and teachers from various departments in the school make an 'x' if they have had contact with student or family that week. The Crisis Team summarizes the weekly data on Fridays and lets classroom/homeroom teachers know if someone has been off the radar. Teachers and Crisis Team work together to choose an intervention if necessary.



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Domain Council Minutes – March 27, 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>School Closure</b>	<p>Education Domain is still working to provide meaningful learning opportunities within the shifting guidelines from DESE.</p> <p>Making some of the school's older Chromebooks available to families with lack of technology in their homes.</p> <p>We expect tuition payments to continue as normal this year, but the Finance Committee will work a FY21 budget which includes a salary freeze for discussion.</p>	
<b>Director Search</b>	<p>Hiring Committee met with the internal candidate, Kate Saccento, and will be moving her forward in the process.</p> <p>Interview with the full BoT is scheduled for Monday 4/6.</p> <p>Parent and Staff interviews have been scheduled and the committee is soliciting interview questions from appropriate stakeholders.</p>	
<b>Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting</b>	<p>School Closure</p> <p>Hiring Committee</p>	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	<p>April 3, 2020 10:00a <a href="https://zoom.us/j/325123002">https://zoom.us/j/325123002</a></p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<p>10:45am</p>	



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Domain Council Minutes – April 3, 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>School Continuation</b>	<p>The School will be making some older Chromebooks available to families, prioritizing families with high needs, including those with multiple children or limited digital resources.</p> <p>New guidelines and learning expectations have been created for all grade levels with a continued understanding that individual families will respond to the best of their capabilities.</p>	<p>Dan will send an email to all parents with a Google form to request a Chromebook.</p>
<b>Director Search</b>	<p>Parent and Staff interviews have been completed and feedback from interviewers is being collected.</p> <p>Board of Trustees interview is scheduled for April 6 at 6:30p</p>	
<b>Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting</b>	<p>School Continuation</p> <p>Hiring Committee</p> <p>Board Meeting Agenda</p>	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	<p>April 10, 2020 <a href="https://zoom.us/j/325123002">https://zoom.us/j/325123002</a></p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<p>10:30am</p>	



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Domain Council Minutes – April 10, 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>School Continuation</b>	<p>Massachusetts has officially received a Federal waiver to cancel MCAS this year.</p> <p>Easthampton schools have decided to cancel April break and continue with schooling. Since we follow the Easthampton schedule we will be doing the same.</p>	<p>Dan and Lara will communicate these announcements to parents.</p>
<b>Director Search</b>	<p>All interviews have been completed and the committee met to discuss feedback. Kate has provided a list of references and the committee will be contacting them using a list of prepared questions.</p> <p>The committee will meet on the morning of April 14 to discuss the final recommendation.</p>	
<b>Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting</b>	<p>School Continuation</p> <p>Budget</p>	
<b>Next Meeting Date/Time/Location</b>	<p>April 24, 2020 10:00a</p> <p><a href="https://zoom.us/j/325123002">https://zoom.us/j/325123002</a></p>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<p>11:30am</p>	



**Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes- March 25, 2020, 7:30 a.m.**

<https://zoom.us/j/148002843>

**Present:** Gaby Blaustein, Lara Ramsey, Kelly Woods, Dawn Reeseman, Nicole Grinaski, Liz Preston, Dawn Reeseman

Topic	Discussion	Action
Salary Increase Formula	The committee worked collaboratively to turn the outline presented at the last Board meeting into a formal proposal to present at the next Board meeting (April 15 <sup>th</sup> ).	Present proposal at 4.15 Board meeting.
Next meeting time/date/location	April 22, 7:30 a.m. <a href="https://zoom.us/j/148002843">https://zoom.us/j/148002843</a> Password = heypeople	
Adjournment	8:35 a.m.	