

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes– Wednesday, Sept. 14th, 2022, 6:30 pm

Location: HCCPS and Zoom

Present: In-person: Kate Saccento, Chris Korczak, Kathleen Hulton, Sara Schieffelin, Rich Senecal, Tala Elia, Andrew Rosehill-Coate, Emily Boddy, Dan Klatz, Rashida Krigger, Kathleen Szegda, Kate Ewell, Laura Davis

By Zoom:

Regrets: Matt Dube

Guests: In-person: Gabrielle Hartley

By Zoom: Natalia Korczak, Nicole Singer, Kerri Simonelli, Andrew Sirulnik, Mitch Hartley, Tiffany Ross, Sharon, Nan (joined at 8pm), Shelly Nichols

Facilitator: Kathleen S.

Notetaker: Sara

List keeper: Emily

Timekeeper: Rich

Mission statement read by: Kate S.

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgments	Kate S. acknowledged the staff for a successful start of the year. Rashida reminded everyone in person about the Owl technology and the need to speak up so people on Zoom can hear.	
Any Thank You Notes Needed?	None noted	
BOT Visibility This Month?	Class nights are coming up–this is an opportunity for BOT members to introduce themselves and speak briefly about the board. Coffee hours, to be scheduled, are another opportunity.	

Minutes	Change the spelling of Rashida’s name in the JEDI section.	Tala motioned to approve the July 13th meeting minutes with edit; Dan seconded; the Board approved the July 13th meeting minutes with edit by consensus.
Public Comment	Gabrielle Hartley spoke about the contents of the letter she sent to the BOT ahead of time, asking for the BOT to amend the policy around switching grade levels to allow for more flexibility and discretion on the part of the administration when making decisions. She reiterated that decisions should always be made in the best interest of the child and that children change over time and a bright line rule requiring a decision 7 months in advance does not allow for the flexibility that may be necessary to support a child's emotional wellness and development or educational needs.	
Start of Year Update: (Update) Kate and Laura	<p>Laura shared that new atelier and music teachers, Cindy Sperry, Nicole Singer, Nick Deysher, Chris Jenkins, have joined the staff. New TAs include: Marianne Vasquez, Marilyn Rivera, Damiona Reid, Nataly Gonzalez, Rowan Rosario. New after-school and recess TA is Liza Eaton.</p> <p>PD days and the start of school meetings went well. Laura noted the positive energy of the staff and their emphasis on students. There is emphasis this year on looking at how to support student behavior through relationship building, accountability, and clear expectations. There is a focus on codifying existing strategies to support student behavior.</p> <p>New teacher mentoring program is happening—all new teachers have a mentor and pair are having weekly meetings. Mentors and new teachers will also meet regularly with Laura.</p> <p>Kate S. noted that there is a lot happening at the school. Offered recognition for that we have gone through a lot over the past few years with COVID and a lot of transition. She noted staff are determined to help get things “back to normal.” She also offered recognition to the admin team, especially Grace and Carla, as experienced staff who have held together the foundation of the school through all the transitions. She also recognized Nicole, Cait, Mary and Rashida in new roles, and Rebecca and Gina for their leadership</p>	

	<p>roles over the summer. She highlighted that everyone is supporting the new teachers and staff members. Rashida reported that the Link Families program happened over the summer and that First Friday Fest was a success. Community Service Learning and Class Parties are also happening.</p>	
<p>Annual Report: (Update) Kate</p>	<p>Kate presented the annual report which provides an overview of the school. Written in July and due to DESE mid-summer. Report did not come back with questions or comments from DESE this year. Report is in BOT packet and posted on the website. Lara, Gina, Rebecca, Carla, and Kate all worked on it. Kate noted the accountability plan (Appendix A) as being important. There was an error with the survey and people were unable to answer a few of the questions due to technical issues, so a follow-up survey will be sent to the community soon.</p> <p>Kathleen S. thanked everyone who participated in putting the report together.</p> <p>Tala asked a question about if there are any anticipated barriers to meeting the goals that were not met last year in the coming years. Kate S. noted that she didn't think there would be.</p> <p>Dan asked about the recruitment and retention plan, and noted that our falls below comparable schools with regards to socio-economic status, and English language learners. Dan made a comment about needing to determine what financial resources we are willing to put toward meeting this goal and moving toward being more comparable. This is being discussed in LRP and Dan suggested that it should be discussed by BOT as well.</p>	
<p>New Board of Trustee Member: (Discussion + Decision) Sara</p>	<p>GABS is proposing Gina as the teacher member of the BOT. She has submitted her resume and BOT interest form (included in the meeting packet). Gina made a statement about why she is interested in serving on the BOT, noting that she thinks it is important to have a teacher voice.</p>	<p>Kate E motioned to approve Gina as the teacher BOT member; Kathleen H seconded; Gina was approved as the new BOT member by consensus</p> <p>Gina will be retroactively proposed at the annual meeting in the spring</p>
<p>Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion (JEDI): (Update + Discussion)</p>	<p>Kathleen H. reported that JEDI met this evening for their first meeting since the summer. There is a survey forthcoming about BOT members' feelings of</p>	

<p>JEDI Team</p>	<p>inclusion and belonging on the BOT. Kathleen will disseminate. These will be anonymous. GABS chair (Sara) and Kathleen will look at the findings and present to BOT. Sara and Kathleen will also be available to speak confidentially to any BOT member who wants to discuss further.</p> <p>Kathleen S. gave an overview of what the JEDI committee does.</p> <p>Kathleen H. gave a recap of what JEDI has presented to the BOT last year regarding dominant culture (see slides in packet).</p> <p>Moving forward the plan is to continue with monthly presentations to and conversations with the BOT about dominant culture.</p>	
<p>Long Range Plan: (Discussion) Dan</p>	<p>Dan offered a summary of the LRP meeting minutes. Shared LRP up-date document (see document in final meeting packet). Gave background on previous LRPs. Conversation about looking at expanding the BOT and getting more community members involved. Question about why it is important to have community members, when we are a cooperative of parents/caretakers? What do we want/need from community members? Kathleen S. noted that community members could bring an outside perspective. Kathleen also noted that it could be a mutually beneficial partnership with another organization, such as Lathrop, Easthampton City Arts, the Academy of Music etc. Rashida reiterated the importance of having community relationships and bringing value to the greater community, and being good citizens. Laura spoke about charter schools needing an outside perspective, and having connections outside that anchor the school in the community. Gina also offered suggestion about building connections with early childhood or preschool organizations. Kate E. asked about the history of community partnerships and noted that it seems like this has been difficult in the past to recruit and retain community members. Tala liked the suggestion about having community members not needing to be on a committee, but rather there just to offer perspective to the BOT as this would be less of a commitment. Dan shared his view that school has been successful, in part, due to replicating itself with like-minded families, and he reiterated the low numbers in terms of representing the communities we serve and that it should be a priority to move the school to be more</p>	<p>Emily/GABS will by-laws check to see if community members need to serve on committee</p> <p>GABS, JEDI and LRP to identify and discuss who might be good community partners</p>

	<p>inline with the communities we serve. Suggestion that we look to recruit community members who could help in this area? Kathleen S. noted that this needs to work for both parties—what can we offer to them? Evaluation of administration structure—LRP can't evaluate this. This needs to be a supervisory question for directors, coordinator, and president and vice president. What were the goals that were hoped to be achieved by the change in structure and were they met?</p> <p>Dan noted that the school has a unique management structure, as it believes in shared management. Question about if there needs to be a specific committee to look at this? Or do we dedicate a portion of the next BOT meeting? Kathleen S. noted that we need more information before we can assess this. Clarification about if this should be examined? Rashida asked clarification about if LRP should evaluate this? This would fit into the “institutional structures” section. Tala reminded the BOT about the decision we made when Dedre was retiring, with the understanding that it would be looked at in the LRP. If the LRP is not the right place for this to be evaluated, then the BOT should be looking at this. We have already committed to looking at this question. Dan reiterated that there is not the data or resources for the LRP to be answering this that has come out of surveys and conversations. Suggestions that an ad hoc committee be convened. Reminder that there was an ad hoc committee formed to initially make this decision. Suggestion to push this decision out a year given the uniqueness of last year, and hence difficulty w evaluation. Agreement that there has not been time to see if the goals have been achieved. Clarification about the change that was made. Is the school committed to a shared management structure? Laura noted that these conversations are difficult to disentangle the structure from the people that are in the positions. Question about when the LRP is supposed to wrap up—end of fall is the aim but it is behind schedule. Shared management questions should be on the agenda for next month.</p>	
--	---	--

<p>Lunch program: (Update & Discussion) Kate</p>	<p>Kate S. presented information about school lunch programs. Kate offered background about federal and state lunch program changes. Kate reports that she received inquiries about why Hilltown doesn't participate in these programs, and has been researching various options. BOT discussed the pros and cons of joining the state-wide lunch program. There are logistical and staffing barriers, and issues with quality and waste. And not offering free lunch is an equity issue. BOT considered that some people may be hesitant to apply for free or reduced lunch. BOT discussed the stigma associated with free lunch, and that adopting the state program would destigmatize it. BOT recognized that there is not an easy answer for Hilltown. Comment that we need to address this and not just put it off.</p>	<p>Will continue to consider school lunch program</p>
<p>Q4 Financials: (Update) Kate</p>	<p>Kate shared Q4 financials which were passed by the financial committee (see Q4 financials in packet)</p>	<p>Tala moved to approve the Q4 financials; Andrew seconded; Q4 financials approved by consensus</p>
<p>Domain Council Meeting Frequency: (Discussion and Decision) Domain Council</p>	<p>Kathleen S. shared a proposal to decrease frequency of Domain Counsel meetings from twice a month to once a month (see text of proposal in packet). Comment made that the counsel would not be precluded from having additional meetings. Question about what is the background for having two meetings a month? Dan shared that it is for administrative supervision and oversight. The President and Vice-president observe and provide oversight to administration. Domain counsel serves to keep the BOT apprised of what is happening at the school. Comment that Kate and Kathleen S. speak frequently—more than once a week. It was noted that Domain Counsel is a public meeting and a lot of the oversight and supervision does not need to happen in a public meeting. It was noted that last year Domain Counsel only met once a month, so that goal on the annual report was not met. Comment made about the importance of needing to build a relationship between administration and the BOT, but not needing to have it formally in bi-weekly meetings.</p>	<p>Emily moved to approve the proposal to decrease the frequency of domain counsel meetings; Rich, seconded; the proposal was approved by consensus.</p>

8:20 BOT Retreat: (Update)	Tala reports that a retreat will be planned for later in the fall/winter, and that in the meantime she will send a doodle poll to plan a social gathering for the BOT to welcome and get to know Laura.	Tala will send a doodle poll out to find a time for a social opportunity. Retreat will be scheduled later in the fall/winter.
Committee Reports -- Questions Only	none	
New Business	Shared management discussion; Title I policies for approval; up-date on school lunch program; committee goals; BOT goals	Committees to come up with annual goals Domain counsel will come up with BOT goals
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next Meetings: Wednesday, Oct. 12th, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. in-person and on Zoom Facilitator: Kathleen S. . Snacks: Emily/Andrew Drinks: Andrew/Emily Newsletter blurb: Kate S.	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:33 p.m.	Dan motioned to move to executive session and adjourn the meeting following executive session; Emily seconded; the executive session was convened.

Tentative Agenda Topic for the Oct. 12th Board Meeting: Shared management discussion; Title I policies for approval; up-date on school lunch program; committee goals; BOT goals