HCCPS Board of Trustees
Meeting & Retreat Agenda
June 9, 2026 6:30pm
At HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027
In person and On Zoom.

Present: Chris Kusek, Meghan Carroll, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Grace Mrowicki, Lily Newman, Emily Boddy, Lauren Ames, Neal Teague, Kathleen Hulton, Tala Elia, Lauren Ames, Ben Carlis, Sarah Buttenweiser,

By Zoom: Kylan Mandile, Steve Sell

Regrets: Andrea Hermans, Adam Szymkowicz

Guests:
By Zoom: None

Facilitator: Lily Newman
Notetaker: Emily Boddy
List keeper: Sarah B.
Timekeeper: Lauren
Mission statement read by: Tala

Topic (estimated time)	**Discussion**	**Action (if necessary)**
Welcoming (read mission statement) (Tala Elia): (5 min) ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgement ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper ● BOT Visibility leading into start of year ● Approve minutes from May BoT mtg Lily Newman	Appreciation for Alex and Ultimate Frisbee, end of season parents/kids game. Gratitude for departing members, Tala, Ben and Lily (and Andrea in absentia) Events: Classroom events: Ancient Roman expo, Chinese history puppet show, National Parks, Summer Celebration, Goodbye Ceremony, Graduation	Sarah motioned to approve and Ben seconded; the Board approved meeting May minutes by consensus.
Public Comment (5 min)	None.	
School Leader Updates Rebecca, Chris, Meghan	Hiring: Coteacher for Blues (special ed teacher) Science teacher for Prisms	

Final Minutes Approved on:

● Staffing ● Schedule ● Student work ● Other	Currently hiring for grade 1-4 special ed teacher. Rebecca summarized the impact projects, collaboration with ABC Learning (younger kids presented there about 'helpers'), a class got a compost bin for the upper grades' lunches. Schedule: Simplified student schedules through implementation of consistent dismissal times across all grade levels (3:00 p.m. daily, 2:00 p.m. Wednesdays). ● Preserved Hilltown's commitment to weekly Civic Action programming while redesigning the broader schedule structure. ● Shifted buddy activities, mini-courses, and other community-building programming into the Wednesday schedule to create greater flexibility and coherence throughout the week. ● Expanded access to Health and Spanish instruction in grades K-4, strengthening wellness education and world language exposure across the full K-8 program. ● Added a dedicated English teacher and 5/week English class to the Prisms schedule, though that will reduce Spanish class from 2/week to 1/week ● Redesigned the Grades 5-6 (Purples) schedule to create stronger and more consistent reading and writing blocks, providing additional opportunities for literacy instruction, intervention, and skill development. ● Added dedicated WIN (What I Need) and Independent Reading time in Grades 5-6 to support targeted intervention, enrichment, and differentiation. ● Expanded Academic Skills and Learning	

Final Minutes Approved on:

	Strategies programming in Grades 7-8 to strengthen student support services while maintaining access to core academic instruction. ● Introduced middle school Selectives, providing students with greater choice and opportunities to explore interests in areas such as PE, Music, Drama, Technology, and Atelier. ● Returning to mixed age lunches in K-4to leverage cross age experiences and and strengthen community value ● Created more consistent K-8 scheduling structures, improving alignment across grade bands and supporting smoother transitions for students as they progress through the school. ● Maintained dedicated collaboration and planning time for educators, including Wednesday integration and student support meetings, to strengthen instructional coordination and student services.	
Finance Committee (20 min) **Kylan** ● Finance Committee Reports ● FY27 Budget Approval ● Capital projections and processes next steps	**Proposal:** Kylan brought forth the proposal (in packet) to address which financial contracts require board approval. Proposal is included for reference in the packet. Question raised about the $100,000 threshold. Kylan explained that Chapter B indicates this threshold, guidance from DESE. Chapter B doesn't apply to us as a charter school, but used this as guidance. Member asks if there could be a figure more reflective of our whole budget. Kylan says that they'd have to go back and see what types of contracts are lower - striking balance between board oversight	Neal motioned to approve FY27 Budget and Emily seconded; the Board approved the budget by consensus.

Final Minutes Approved on:

	and not preventing school to move quickly on contracts when necessary. Lily notes that she works with a lot of smaller districts where the threshold is closer to $25,000 Kylan clarifies: this is to address multi-year contracts (and suggests he clarifies the language to better reflect that) Lily proposes it gets kicked back to Finance - for a more detailed proposal based on what we really need and to clarify the language to reflect true intentions. Tala agrees with needing more clarity. Kylan will take this back to Finance to bring back an updated proposal. **Finance Committee Balance Sheet:** We are on track to have a surplus - amount not yet known. **FY27 Budget Approval** Big picture: projected tuition increase will cover cost increases. DESE messaging decrease in Title 1, special ed, but less impactful than originally thought. **Capital Expenditures -** Presentation included in the packet. Tala suggests board creates a policy of threshold, replenishment, etc. needing board approval re the Capital fund, capital projects. Neal suggests fall project for the policy, In the absence of such policy, Chris has the authority to make a decision around capital	

Final Minutes Approved on:

	improvements. Eg continue as the status quo until a policy is in place.	
Personnel Committee (10 min) Tala ● TA Hiring Policy ● Benefits updates	Proposals included in the packet. **TA Hiring Policy** - process to allow for speedy timeline and flexibility, as outlined in policy in packet. This is not a change in practice, just establishing it as a formal process/policy. **Benefits Update -** many district schools have Employee Assistance Programs providing general 'life support' - childcare programs, legal, mental health support. Increasing issue/demand from employees. Discussed in PErsonnel how a more comprehensive health support package could be provided. A vendor was determined, contract signed.	Emily motioned to approve TA HIring Policy and Lauren seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.
Other Committee Reports (20 min) Chairs ● LIP (Lauren) ● GABS (Emily) ● Equity Team (Kathleen)	LIP hasn't met since April. Will meet again soon. GABS Board Book progress explained; Policy organizational system; addressing google drives to work for us rather than confuse the process Equity Team - So much rich discussion and problem solving around student experience and student body - both diversity but also equity - curricula, how difference and inequality show up at Hilltown and can be addressed in different ways by the school. 1. Equity teams in schools are supposed to be fulfilling role of 'diversity officer' particularly focused on employees - hopes team will look at diversity and equity in terms of staff experience. 2. Preview of ways the board may be pulled in more on this in the future. The last long range plan had specific goals about making the	GABS working on starting a spreadsheet that will be used by others to input relevant docs.

	student body more diverse - race + social class. Lunch access, after and before school care, transportation. Chris adds: piloting before school kids club; pilot relationship with River Valley Coop for meals. Starting to think more robustly about transportation, our catchment area.	
Looking Ahead (10 min) **Lily** ● Summer activities ● Surveys and data collection ● School leader evaluation ● Staffing/Board transitions ● July meeting - virtual	July 8 virtual meeting on the calendar. Encourage peers to fill out surveys. Members need to complete School leader evaluation.	
Wrap Up (5 mins) **Lily** ● Norm review ● Action items review ● Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb ● Next steps/July meeting agenda items	July Meeting: Board Leadership vote, autumn look at capital expenditures, board book, board policies Emily - newsletter blurb	
Adjournment Lily Newman	Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm	Tala motioned to adjourn; Lily seconded.

Final Minutes Approved on:

HCCPS Board of Trustees
Meeting Agenda
Wednesday July 8th, 2026 6:30pm
Join Zoom Meeting
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84948181413?pwd=0Q475dU8403OfbwMCEdidBM7z2lU9D.1

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

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

Facilitator: Neal Teague

Topic	Who	Action	Est. Start Time
Welcoming (read mission statement): (5 min) ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper, norm observer ● BOT visibility this month ● Approve minutes from June BoT mtg	Neal Teague	Decision	6:30 pm
Public Comment (5 min)	Neal Teague		6:35
School Leader Updates (10 min) ● Staffing	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Meghan Carroll	Discussion	6:40
GABS Committee (5 min) ● Elect officers	Emily Boddy	Discussion & Decision	6:45
Looking Ahead (10 min) ● Summer activities ● Surveys and data collection ● School leader evaluation - BOT feedback survey due July 10th-For real!!	Neal Teague	Discussion	6:50

Wrap Up (5 mins) ● Norm review ● Action items review ● Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb ● Next steps/July meeting agenda items	Neal Teague	Discussion	6:55
Adjournment	Neal Teague	Decision	8:00

Board Collaboration Norms - Working Draft

1. **Assume Positive Intent and Honor Impact**
   We approach one another with trust, curiosity, and generosity. We acknowledge that our words and decisions have real impact and take responsibility for listening, clarifying, and adjusting when needed.

2. **Shared Voice and Attentive Listening**
   We ensure one speaker at a time, with full presence and attention. We contribute thoughtfully, make space for all voices, and work to elevate perspectives from across our community.

3. **Focus on Our Role and Work**
   We remain grounded in our role as a Board of Trustees: we hold the charter, the legal agreement with the state and are responsible for the oversight that ensures fidelity to our mission, organizational viability and student results. We support, collaborate with and ensure leadership has the resources and strategies to advance this work.

4. **Commitment to Preparation, Process and Due Diligence**
   We honor the importance of our work and our limited time by consistently meeting our commitments, running efficient meetings, and coming prepared with materials reviewed and key questions considered in advance. We engage deeply to ensure sound, mission-centered decision-making. We follow OML and all BOT policies and bylaws in our processes.

5. **Consensus Decision-Making**
   We commit to making all decisions by consensus, as is outlined in our bylaws.

6. **Rigorous Dialogue with Respect and Care**
   We welcome healthy debate and examine ideas fully and collaboratively. We work diligently while maintaining respect and care for one another. Disagreement is a

contribution, not a conflict.

7. **Collective Well-Being and Sustainable Participation**
   We take care of ourselves and others. We acknowledge professional and personal demands—including the need for virtual participation at times—while committing to consistent engagement, follow-through, and presence.