



Annual Board of Trustees Retreat

Date and Time: May 21st , 5:30-8:00 pm

Goals:

1. Reflect on our SY25-26 work to identify strengths to build on and areas for continued growth.
2. Begin to articulate our vision for Hilltown in 2030 and how the Board can enable and catalyze progress towards it.

PREWORK: Packet review, including Charter Renewal and Accountability Plan docs

Time	Agenda Item and Details	People/Notes
5:30	Opening (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome and Mission Statement - Purpose of the annual Board retreat, agenda and goals - Approve minutes from April meeting 	Lily Newman
5:40	Board Business Personnel: 10 mins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salary Scales - Health Benefits- HRA and Diversion proposal for discussion and decision 	Neal Teague Tala Elia
5:50	Appreciations: Board Awards (20 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share individual appreciations for each Board member and their contributions through Board Award presentations 	Lily Newman
6:10	Reflections on our work as a Board (25 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the role of the board as defined by the MCPSA. - Discussion - Goals and Actions - Progress and areas for improvement 	Neal Teague HCCPS Bo...
6:35	BREAK (5 mins)	
6:40	Where we are and what we've committed to (10 mins) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grounding in our Charter Renewal and Accountability Plan - summarizing our key goals - turn and talk; share out 	Lily Newman Copy of A...

	<p>Visioning (40 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Framing and purpose 2. In small mixed groups, discuss your vision of HCCPS in 2030. 3. Gallery Walk of charts 4. Synthesis of Trends for 2030 	
7:25	<p>Leveraging Governance to Enable and Catalyze (20 mins)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grounding in our purpose and academic leadership 2. How can we leverage the BOT to enable and catalyze the vision? What is our specific role? 3. How can we specifically leverage the Committee structure? 4. In committees discuss the specific focus that can best enable and catalyze the work in 26-27. 	Neal Teague
7:45	<p>Reflections and Closing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflections 2. Looking ahead 3. Adjourn 	Lily Newman



HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

April 8, 2026 6:30pm

At HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Also: Join Zoom Meeting

: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83679293502?pwd=bjZya3FvVTFmd216WlkvZDVPLzhjZz09>

Present: Chris Kusek, Meghan Carroll, Grace Mrowicki, Lily Newman, Emily Boddy, Lauren Ames, Adam Szymkowicz, Neal Teague, Kathleen Hulton, Tala Elia, Lauren Ames, Ben Carlis

By Zoom: Andrea Hermans

Regrets: Kylan Mandile, Sarah Buttenweiser, Steve Sell

Guests: Sydney Henthorn

By Zoom:

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: Neal

Timekeeper: Ben Carlis

Mission statement read by: Tala

Topic (estimated time)	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Tala Elia): (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgement ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper ● BOT Visibility leading into start of year ● Approve minutes from March BoT mtg <p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>Appreciations: Tiffany - event planning, coordinating for Annual Meeting, and generally how much she does.</p> <p>LIP meeting that went forward in spite of Adam being unwell.</p> <p>Board Visibility:</p> <p>Artspark April 10 Coffee Hour April 16 Seed Opera (greens and yellows) April 17 at 8:40 Music Festival May 15</p>	<p>Kathleen motioned to approve and Ben seconded; the Board approved meeting March minutes by consensus.</p>
<p>Public Comment (5 min)</p>	<p>None.</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p>School Leader Updates (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing • Initiatives and Events • Other <p>Chris, Rebecca, Meghan</p>	<p>Admissions:</p> <p>Gratitude to Monique who helped bring about the data for this report - 229 applications - waitlist deep across most grades, flexibility to maintain enrollment across grade bands. First year with new grade alignment. All 7 5th grade seats accepted. 2 6th grade seats accepted. Waitlists remain strong. 26 on 6th waitlist, 15 on 5th grade waitlist. Apps from core sending districts, eg Northampton and Easthampton. Record number of Hampden county applicants (which can't be prioritized due to the State's stipulated charter).</p> <p>Asked Robert Carpenter about how flexible we can be about accepting students across grades. We can add flexibility about how we fill vacant spots if we rewrite a policy , for example to say we can accept across 5-8, as opposed to directly into the grade with a vacancy.</p> <p>Inclusion + Co-teaching:</p> <p>Address how parents can understand co-teaching better - how does co-teaching support special ed. In a way similar to pulling students out. Will create a presentation for families in the coming months.</p> <p>MCAS:</p> <p>Fewer than 5 opt-outs this year. Asks that BoT communicate about the importance of MCAS, how it can affect our autonomy.</p> <p>All Schools:</p> <p>Staff had a visioning session about All School. Dan Klatz helped frame purpose and history, which was a great jumping off point for what it can look like moving forward. Discussion of including Prisms in All School: Selectives will allow students to have a "selective" offering around All School planning and prep.</p> <p>Civic Action:</p>	
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Final Minutes Approved on:

	<p>Yellow and Greens did 'mud days' - learning about erosion, native plants. Used a section of the playground to build a mud village, and then will replant the area.</p>	
<p>Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Overview (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it is; how we do it • How it supports Hilltown's range of learners • Progress and next steps <p>Meghan, Rebecca and Chris</p>	<p>Meghan gave a presentation (slides included)</p> <p>Explained MTSS - Multi-tiered systems of support - who does it, how to screen kids, tiered interventions depending on needs of kids.</p> <p>Levels of restrictions - Tier 1: 80% apply to all students Tier 2: targeted interventions, individual or group Tier 3: most intensive interventions - assessments, individual plan, more frequently used for kids</p> <p>Hilltown determined 3 tiers wasn't enough - includes Tier 1.5; Tier 2.5 (see presentation for details)</p> <p>Gives more agency and tools to teachers to build systems in their classrooms that work.</p> <p>Chris, Rebecca, Meghan, Nurse Mary along with other members of staff are the MTSS team - meet weekly.</p> <p>Be Good People - parts of this SEL open source curriculum is being used at whole classroom level across the school.</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p>Climate Survey Follow up/Update (15 mins)</p> <p>Meghan / Rebecca</p>	<p>Following up on Climate Survey from last month's meeting, with disaggregated data.</p> <p>Slides with details included in the packet.</p> <p>Survey was developed by Teacher Leaders and Equity Team.</p>	<p>What is inclusive imagery?</p>
<p>Annual Meeting Recap & Next Steps (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Event summary ● Input and vision ideas shared ● Draw names for Board Awards ● LRP next steps ● Next Steps for Meetings of the Cooperative <p>Lily Newman, Chris Kusek</p>	<p>Lily recapped the annual meeting. Her summary is in the packet.</p> <p>Generally, parents want more of what they are already have.</p> <p>Nature, STEAM, less chromebook/EdTech., Community time, bringing community in.</p> <p>Meeting of the Cooperative - fall and spring? Specific topics. Need parent/board support to get more people engaged.</p> <p>Long Range Plan - need Board committee member to chair, need to be thinking through members both staff, parents, community members</p>	
<p>BOT Retreat Updates and Input (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Date: Thursday May 21, 5:30-8:00 pm at HCCPS ● Purpose and goals ● Agenda draft and input <p>Lily</p>	<p>Possible date change to come from Lily via email.</p> <p>Start visioning for the LRP.</p> <p>Lily would like feedback to her draft in the packet.</p>	<p>BoT members send feedback to her draft, which is in the packet.</p>
<p>Equity Team (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● General updates and next steps <p>Kathleen</p>	<p>Kathleen included a report in the packet.</p> <p>BoT appreciates the priorities, bring in student voice based on their civic action projects</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p>Facilities (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates • Contract update and vote <p>Chris Kusek</p>	<p>Issues with sprinkler system and leak in HVAC system.</p> <p>Ongoing issues with facilities, and need to address long term capital improvements, eg sprinkler system</p> <p>Elevator inspection - Otis Elevator inspects and maintains our elevator. 5 year contracts auto-roll over, recently auto-renewed. Other companies coming in at lower rates. Raises question of the Board role in outside contracts. Does it make sense for contracts over a certain amount to come before the board?</p> <p>Any changes to our contract need to happen before summer inspection.</p>	<p>Lily and Neal will speak to lawyers to get clarity. Will loop Kylan in if necessary, re what are other schools doing? Revisit next meeting.</p>
<p>Finance (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates on ongoing FY27 budget development • Anticipated salary adjustment impacts <p>Chris</p>	<p>Requests for great understanding of salary adjustment impacts, eg can we afford this?</p> <p>Also discussed capital reserves and intersection.</p> <p>Passed salary scales as an investment in our staff. Gradual 3 year plan so not to shock the budget.</p> <p>Analysis: key assumptions - conservative financial estimate - all staff goes up, no retirements, etc. This is not what happens, but need to use most conservative case.</p> <p>Tuition increase and projected step cost difference - tuition increase outdoes salary scales increase. Catches up in 2029 as lower step staff keep going up and costs \$10k. Overall, the salary steps are very manageable and affordable in current structure.</p> <p>Timeline was compressed after several personnel meetings, then the board</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

	<p>meeting. The budget that was presented was a very rough budget.</p> <p>The current draft of the budget is healthy, has had a first pass with finance committee. Will come to the board soon.</p> <p>Capital reserve fund is separate and meant for large-scale projects. Reviewed last 7 years - 334k in 2024, after paying for playground, then transferring money back - we are currently at close to 293k. Stable and replenished, though not quite at its high. This is the fund that would pay for sprinkler overhaul.</p> <p>Charter schools don't have access to the same funding streams as district schools. Board needs to revisit fundraising as core to its work.</p> <p>Tala suggests discussing growth projections on that account at future meeting.</p>	
<p>Personnel (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update from faculty presentation • Longevity bonus proposal and vote <p>Chris / Tala</p>	<p>Tala presented longevity proposal, included in packet.</p> <p>Proposal will return to Personnel to clarify prorated/part time employees.</p>	<p>Neal motions to approve the longevity bonus proposal. Lauren seconds. The proposal passes by consensus.</p>
<p>L.I.P (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates and next steps <p>Adam/Lauren</p>	<p>Lauren presented on the LIP meeting. Minutes are included in the packet</p> <p>The committee is looking at Fastbridge, MCAS, DIBBELS, internal/non standardized assessments. Determining what direction to go in next.</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p>Wrap Up (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action items review - Next steps/meeting agenda items - Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb - Snacks and drinks 	<p>Action items:</p> <p>Next Meeting Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retreat + board business 5/21, 5:30pm ● BoT Meeting June 10, 2026 <p>NL Blurb: Emily Boddy Dinner, Retreat: Emily Boddy Drinks: n/a Snacks: n/a</p> <p>Lily will send proposed dates for board retreat BoT send feedback to Lily on board retreat. Have packet items to Kate Aleo by SUNDAY night ahead of that weeks' board meeting</p> <p>Next Meeting: Handling outside contracts (Neal, Lily)</p>	
<p>Adjournment Lily Newman</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:45p</p>	<p>Lauren motioned to adjourn; Ben seconded.</p>

Final Minutes Approved on:

Personnel Committee Health Benefits Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Health Reimbursement Arrangement & Health Diversion Benefit

From: Personnel Committee

Date: May 21, 2026

Proposal to be presented by: Tala Elia and Chris Kusek

Background

Hilltown currently offers two health-related benefits to support employees with the costs of health coverage: a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) for employees enrolled in an HCCPS-sponsored health insurance plan, and a Health Diversion Benefit for eligible employees who carry non-HCCPS-sponsored health coverage.

Rising health insurance premiums have placed increasing financial strain on employees across all plan types. The Personnel Committee reviewed the current benefit levels in light of these pressures and is proposing increases to both benefits effective FY27, in order to better support staff and remain competitive as an employer.

Proposed Changes at a Glance

Benefit	Current	Proposed (FY27)
HRA – Individual Plan	\$1,500/year	\$2,000/year
HRA – Family Plan	\$3,000/year	\$4,000/year
Health Diversion Benefit	Up to \$4,000/year	Up to \$6,000/year

Part 1: Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA)

Current Benefit

For employees covered by the HCCPS health insurance plan, Hilltown currently offers a Health Reimbursement Arrangement that covers a designated dollar amount of copays and deductible expenses to help keep out-of-pocket costs to a minimum. These reimbursements occur mostly automatically as part of the health insurance benefit. Current benefit levels are:

- Individual plan enrollment: \$1,500/year
- Family plan enrollment: \$3,000/year

This benefit terminates on the employee's last date of employment, even if health insurance coverage extends beyond that date.

Proposal

Increase the HRA benefit levels effective FY27 as follows:

- Individual plan enrollment: \$1,500 → \$2,000/year
- Family plan enrollment: \$3,000 → \$4,000/year

Rationale

The proposed increases reflect the growing burden of out-of-pocket health costs on employees as premiums and cost-sharing requirements have risen. Increasing the HRA benefit is a direct and meaningful way to offset these costs and demonstrates Hilltown's commitment to supporting employee wellbeing.

Part 2: Diversion of Health Insurance Benefits

Current Benefit

Eligible employees — those who work at least 20 hours per week — who do not participate in an HCCPS-sponsored health insurance plan may request diversion of allocated benefits. Reimbursement for participation in a non-HCCPS-sponsored health benefit plan is currently capped at the lesser of:

- The employee's actual cost for that plan, or
- \$4,000/year (prorated based on full-time equivalent)

Reimbursement occurs upon submission of appropriate documentation by the due dates in December and June and is considered taxable income. Documentation should be submitted to the Finance Manager. Employees are only eligible for reimbursement if they provide acceptable evidence that the non-HCCPS-sponsored health benefit plan is paid for directly by the employee, the employee's spouse, or the employee's former spouse.

Proposal

Increase the Health Diversion Benefit cap effective FY27 as follows:

- Current cap: \$4,000/year (prorated based on FTE)
- Proposed cap: \$6,000/year (prorated based on FTE)

All existing terms and conditions of the Health Diversion Benefit remain unchanged, including eligibility requirements, documentation requirements, submission deadlines, and taxable income status.

Rationale

The Health Diversion Benefit supports employees who carry their own health coverage outside of the HCCPS plan. As the cost of private and marketplace health plans has risen significantly, the current \$4,000 cap has become less effective at offsetting employee costs. Increasing the cap to \$6,000 better reflects current market costs for individual and family health.

Personnel Committee Salary Scale Proposal to the Board of Trustees

School Psychologist & Therapy Assistant Roles

From: Personnel Committee

Date: May 21, 2026

Proposal to be presented by: Tala Elia and Chris Kusek

Part 1: School Psychologist Salary Scale

Background

The Personnel Committee identified the need for a dedicated salary scale for the School Psychologist role to ensure Hilltown remains competitive in recruiting and retaining qualified professionals. This position typically requires doctoral-level training or other advanced credentials, and compensation structures must reflect that professional standard.

To establish appropriate benchmarks, the Committee used doctoral-level teacher salary scales from local districts as comparables. Hilltown adopted a 7-step structure using steps 5 through 11 from those comparable scales, rather than replicating a full 12-step scale. This approach keeps Hilltown competitive with the market while maintaining a manageable and fiscally responsible compensation framework.

Proposal

Adopt the following School Psychologist salary scale beginning in FY27, with a 2.5% cost-of-living increase applied in each subsequent year:

Step	FY27	FY28	FY29
Step 1	\$77,761	\$79,705	\$81,698
Step 2	\$80,074	\$82,076	\$84,128
Step 3	\$82,457	\$84,518	\$86,631
Step 4	\$84,915	\$87,038	\$89,214
Step 5	\$87,443	\$89,629	\$91,870
Step 6	\$90,049	\$92,300	\$94,607
Step 7	\$92,664	\$94,981	\$97,356

Key Features

- Reflects the advanced training requirements of the School Psychologist role
 - 2.5% COLA increases projected for FY28 and FY29, consistent with Hilltown’s broader compensation framework
 - Positions Hilltown competitively relative to the regional market for this specialized role
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Part 2: Therapy Assistant Salary Scale

Background

The Personnel Committee also developed a new salary scale to cover Therapy Assistant roles, which include:

- SLPA – Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
- COTA – Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
- PTA – Physical Therapy Assistant
- RBT – Registered Behavior Therapist

These positions are consistently difficult to recruit, and Hilltown has limited regional data available for establishing comparable benchmarks. The Committee used the Northampton Public Schools salary scale as the primary comparable. While Northampton tends to represent the higher end among comparable districts, the Committee felt this was appropriate given the recruitment challenges associated with these specialized roles and the need to remain competitive in attracting qualified candidates.

Proposal

Adopt the following Therapy Assistant hourly rate scale beginning in FY27, with a 2.5% cost-of-living increase applied in each subsequent year:

Step	FY27 (\$/hr)	FY28 (\$/hr)	FY29 (\$/hr)
Step 1	\$29.16	\$29.89	\$30.64
Step 2	\$30.33	\$31.09	\$31.87
Step 3	\$31.55	\$32.34	\$33.15
Step 4	\$32.82	\$33.64	\$34.48
Step 5	\$34.16	\$35.01	\$35.89
Step 6	\$35.55	\$36.44	\$37.35

Step	FY27 (\$/hr)	FY28 (\$/hr)	FY29 (\$/hr)
Step 7	\$36.93	\$37.85	\$38.80

Key Features

- 7-step hourly scale applicable to all four Therapy Assistant role types
 - Benchmarked against Northampton Public Schools, reflecting the competitive market for hard-to-recruit therapy positions
 - 2.5% COLA increases projected for FY28 and FY29, consistent with Hilltown's broader compensation framework
 - Provides a clear progression structure to support both recruitment and retention
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HCCPS Board Goals and Notes SY 2024-2025

Important Links: [Role of the Board](#) [BOT Goals](#) [Committee Goals](#) [SY24-25 Self Evaluation](#) [LRP Tracker](#) [\(OLD SY23-24 Self-Eval\)](#)

ROLE OF THE BOARD (from MCPSA):



GOALS SY24-26


Link to Slide Deck: [HCCPS Board Goals 2024](#)

Board Goals for SY24-26	BOT Role	LRP & Committee Alignment	Measures
<p>1. Communicate clearly and be effective messengers for HCCPS’s mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Communicate clearly about the work of the BOT, the school direction and priorities b. Model the tone we want to set in the community c. Establish and share detailed BOT and committee roles, responsibilities, and decision-making 	Exemplary Governance	LRP: Goal 1C Communication & Decision-Making	
<p>2. Promote school leaders’ success with resources and supports aligned to their goals and needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collaborate with HOS to implement an effective performance review process and development plan, built on the recent model b. Support development of clear leader goals and metrics c. Align resources and support to leader goals, including coaching, regular reflection and data review. In 2025-26 the following goals 	Leadership Retention	BOT President: A, B, C	

<p>include specific opportunities for board input and collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Publish and maintain a Long Range Plan Implementation Report by January 2026, documenting progress on key initiatives, upcoming decision points, and opportunities for community input. ii. Create and pilot a clear JEDI decision-making tool with the admin team and Board committees by January 2026. <p>d. Track progress towards goals and leader experience to adapt effectively for success</p>			
<p>3. Advance JEDI work at all levels of HCCPS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure clear long term and immediate JEDI goals and actions are in place b. Ensure clear JEDI policies, procedures and roles are in place at the school and system level (e.g., in handbooks and job descriptions, in BOT and HOS roles) c. Enable JEDI goals and actions with resources, advocacy and support and consistent progress monitoring and reporting. <i>In 2025-26 the HOS goals are to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>Create and pilot a clear JEDI decision-making tool with the admin team and Board committees by January 2026.</i> ii. <i>Conduct one curriculum audit focused on equity and representation by July 2026.</i> iii. <i>Create at least one new structured opportunity for student leadership and voice (e.g., student council Bot liaison) by January 2026.</i> 	<p>High Quality Schools; Student Achievement</p>	<p>LRP Goal 2C Revise BOT structures aligned to JEDI</p>	
<p>4. Catalyze school priorities through a dedicated investment in resource generation, sustainability, and continuous improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a focus and specific actions steps around BOT fundraising and collaboration with FOT b. Expand and diversify BOT membership to include fundraising capacity 	<p>Raise Resources</p>	<p>LRP Goal</p>	

<p>and community representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Establish meaningful local connections to increase the visibility of HCCPS and its connection to local arts and initiatives d. Finalize clear succession plans for the BOT and school leaders e. Ensure school policies and resources support staff sustainability and retention 			
<p>5. Ensure fidelity to the mission of the charter by supporting the school to implement mission aligned programming, staffing, and student outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. <i>Ensure progress towards school-wide goals the DESE accountability measures as captured in the school Accountability and SOA plans.</i> 	<p>High Quality Schools; Act Strategically</p>	<p>LRP Goal 3A</p>	

BOARD SELF-EVALUATION: MCPSA supported this survey - Results here:

 [Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School - BED Report 2025.pdf](#)

Community Vision Notes

Annual Meeting of the Cooperative 2026

SYNTHESIZED VISION



Community input from the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative in 2026 points to a Hilltown in 2030 that will continue to foster the core elements of its mission, deepening and expanding the work we’ve long been committed to. Participants hope to see Hilltown grow into a more vibrant, deeply connected, and inclusive community where all students feel supported and engage in authentic, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning. Learning will be more deeply rooted in nature, grounded in rigorous academics and interconnected with the broader community where students actively contribute and learn.

Students will build meaningful relationships across ages and beyond graduation, strengthening their sense of belonging and connection to others. Through these experiences, they will develop critical thinking, effective communication, and will contribute meaningfully to the broader world.

SYNTHESIZED: START / STOP / CONTINUE

START (prioritized by frequency/emphasis)

- ★ Expand partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and community
- ★ Increase parent/family engagement (especially early grades)
- ★ Create more intentional structures for community connection
- ★ Formalize and deepen nature-based curriculum
- ★ Expand STEAM / arts programming (incl. afterschool)
- Expand communication systems (bulletin boards, paper, platforms)
- Pre-K expansion
- Alumni engagement
- Healthier food options / possible kitchen expansion
- Building upgrades (especially performing arts)
- Cross-age programming (e.g., buddy systems)

CONTINUE

- ★ Nature-based and experiential learning
- ★ Strong community connections and inter-age learning
- ★ Arts integration
- ★ Supporting and retaining high-quality staff
- ★ Social-emotional learning



- ★ Integration of natural environment into curriculum
- Strengthening family connection systems
- Responsible / limited use of technology (especially younger grades)
- Maintaining authenticity and mission

STOP / REDUCE

- Reduce Chromebook / screen time
- Limit reliance on technology

VISION & ACTIONS BY GROUP

GROUP 1

Vision (2030)

- Strong community
- Experiential learning
- Life skills development ✓
- Community/civic involvement + integration ★
- Responsible use of technology
- Less reliance on technology
- Strong connection to the natural world ✓
- Supportive of educators & learning ★

Continue	Start	Stop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature & art-based learning ✓ ● Social-emotional learning ✓ ● Cross-age learning/mixed-age classrooms ✓ ● Strengthen connections with colleges ● Support educators ● Education around social media / AI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ★ Formalize nature-based curriculum ● ★ Expand community involvement ● Healthier school lunch options ● Yearbook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce Chromebook time

GROUP 2

Vision (2030)

- Consistency
- ★ Expanded community engagement
- ★ Increased inter-age community building

- ★ STEAM + lunch (program expansion emphasis)
- Inclusive, rigorous academics ✓
- Maintained authenticity
- Increased diversity ✓

Continue	Start	Stop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supporting & retaining quality staff ★ ● Increased advertising ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industrial kitchen (?) ● ★ Partnerships with local businesses & community entities ● ★ Pre-K expansion ● ★ STEAM / Arts afterschool ● Alumni engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●

GROUP 3

Vision (2030)

- Larger community awareness of Hilltown’s work ★
- Sustained relationships beyond graduation ★
- Intergrade partnerships ★
- Deepened community relationships ★
- Interdisciplinary, experiential learning
- Sharing student work with the larger community
- Inviting community into the school

Continue	Start	Stop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebrating natural spaces & integrating into curriculum ★ ● Intergrade projects & partnerships ★ ● Increasing diversity in staffing ★ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication on paper ● Community bulletin board ● Messaging via Infinite Campus ● Building upgrades for performing arts ★ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●

GROUP 4

Vision (2030)

- Critical thinking ★
- Strong communication (articulate, evidence-based, writing)
- Balance of high-tech and analogue skills ✓
- Community integration ★
- Students engaging with the broader community



- Cooperative learning (bringing adults into community)
- Equity ★
- More intentional supports for younger students
- Access (transportation noted)

Continue	Start	Stop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tech in K-2 (mostly) • Arts integration ★ • Strengthening family connection systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prism / Purple Buddies (cross-age?) • Safer cycling infrastructure • ★ More parent engagement (especially younger grades) • ★ Structures at gatherings for meaningful connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

GROUP 5

Vision (2030)

- Kids who feel supported
- Cycling / safe paths ★
- Community arts integration (but intentional / balanced)
- Stronger parent involvement ✓
- Class in rainbow order (mixed-age / looping concept)
- ★ More cross-age integration (e.g., Prism buddies)
- Maintain commitment to analog teaching & learning ✓ ★
- ★ More onboarding for new families (orientation to Hilltown culture)
- More visible, structured communication & connection
- Gardening / sustainability / solar

(No explicit Start/Stop/Continue)

ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (Hilltown)			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location	Easthampton
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Central Berkshire, Chesterfield-Goshen, Conway, Deerfield, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Leverett, Mohawk Trail, New Salem-Wendell, Northampton, Orange, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, Shutesbury, Southampton, South Hadley, Sunderland, Ware, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg
Year Opened	1995	Year(s) Renewed	2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025
Maximum Enrollment	218	Chartered Grade Span	K-8
<p>Mission Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To involve young people in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies, to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning. • To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational programs. • To cultivate children’s individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us. 			

Key Design Elements (with parenthetical citations to pages from the charter application or charter amendment):

1. 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. (p. 1, original charter application)
2. Sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program. (p. 1, original charter application)
3. Cultivate children’s individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us. (p. 1, original charter application)

The charter school commits to meeting Criteria 1 through 10 as outlined in the Charter School Performance Criteria.

Date of Preliminary Department Approval:	9/3/2025
Date of Board Approval:	
Date of Department Approval:	

Objectives and Measures related to Mission and Key Design Elements (required):

<p>Objective (for KDE 1): Hilltown students will participate in interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, experiential learning experiences annually that foster critical thinking and engagement.</p>	
<p>Measure: At least 95% of students in grades K–8 will successfully complete at least two interdisciplinary projects annually (as measured by scoring a passing grade of “Accomplished” or above on the HCCPS integration rubric) that integrate at least two or more traditional subject areas/disciplines and include hands-on, experiential components that align with state standards.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of K–8 students who scored a passing grade of “Accomplished” on at least two qualifying interdisciplinary projects during the academic year, as measured by HCCPS integration rubric <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Director of Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with the Arts Integration Specialist and classroom teachers ● When: Annually, during curriculum documentation in late spring (May–June) ● Where: Data will be documented in a shared digital curriculum portfolio (e.g., Google Drive or curriculum documentation platform) and summarized in the annual School Report and Accountability Tracker maintained by the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning and Board of Trustees through its program oversight committee.
<p>Measure: At least 90% of all students in grades 3–8 will score in the “low-risk” categories (at or above the national 30th percentile in reading) on nationally normed assessments (e.g., FastBridge), demonstrating the effectiveness of interdisciplinary, experiential learning in supporting core academic development.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aggregate percentage of students (in grades 3-8) meeting or exceeding the 30th percentile in reading <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Director of Teaching and Learning and Academic Support Coordinator ● When: Fall & Spring assessment windows, with summative analysis in June ● Where: Data will be stored in the FastBridge dashboard, summarized in internal school-wide data spreadsheets, and reported to the Board of Trustees through its program oversight committee.

<p>Measure: At least 90% of all students in grades 3–8 will score in the “low-risk” categories (at or above the national 30th percentile in math) on nationally normed assessments (e.g., FastBridge), demonstrating the effectiveness of interdisciplinary, experiential learning in supporting core academic development.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aggregate percentage of students (in grades 3-8) meeting or exceeding the 30th percentile in math <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Director of Teaching and Learning and Academic Support Coordinator ● When: Fall & Spring assessment windows, with summative analysis in June ● Where: Data will be stored in the FastBridge dashboard, summarized in internal school-wide data spreadsheets, and reported to the Board of Trustees through its program oversight committee.
<p>Objective (for KDE 2): Hilltown will foster a connected, inclusive school community in which students and families actively engage in collaborative events and traditions.</p>	
<p>Measure: At least 90% of families who respond to the annual satisfaction survey will report a strong sense of community, with at least 40% of families responding.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total number and percentage of families who complete the annual satisfaction survey ● Percentage of respondents who indicate a strong sense of community (as measured by Likert-scale items) <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Head of School, in collaboration with Family Engagement Coordinator ● When: Annually in May or June ● Where: Data will be collected via an online survey platform (e.g., Google Forms), analyzed, and stored in the school’s administrative drive. Summary results will be shared with the Board and school community in the Annual Report
<p>Measure: At least 90% of grade 5–8 students will report a sense of belonging at Hilltown with at least 70% of students responding.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Total number and percentage of students in grades 5-8 who complete the annual school climate survey

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of respondents who indicate a sense of belonging (as measured by Likert-scale items) <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Head of School, in collaboration with Director of Teaching and Learning ● When: Annually in Spring ● Where: Data will be collected via an online survey platform (e.g., Google Forms), analyzed, and stored in the school’s administrative drive. Summary results will be shared with the Board and school community in the Annual Report
<p>Objective (for KDE 3): Hilltown students will engage annually in civic or service-oriented learning that encourages individual voice, empathy, and community responsibility.</p>	
<p>Measure: At least 95% of 8th grade students will successfully complete a capstone project, by scoring a passing score of “Accomplished” or above on the HCCPS capstone rubric, that reflects individual voice through research, public facing performance-based presentation, and an interactive component.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percentage of 8th grade students who score a passing grade of “Accomplished” or above complete a capstone project with all three required elements: research, public presentation, and interactive component, as measured by HCCPS capstone rubric. <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: 8th Grade teachers , in collaboration with the Director of Teaching and Learning ● When: Spring trimester, with final data compiled in June ● Where: Data will be documented in student portfolios, summarized in a shared tracking spreadsheet, and highlighted in the Annual School Report
<p>Measure: At least 90% of K-8 students will successfully complete a placed based community oriented project, as measured by scoring a passing score of “Accomplished” or</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p>

above on the HCCPS Civics Action Rubric, that reflects empathy and community responsibility through identifying and investigating a problem and innovating and implementing a solution.

- Percentage of students per grade level who successfully complete a qualifying community oriented project, as measured by scoring a passing score of “Accomplished” or above on the HCCPS Civics Action rubric.

Data collection plan:

- Who: Classroom teachers, supported by the Director of Teaching and Learning
- When: Throughout the year, with final data reviewed in May–June
- Where: Data will be captured in grade-level documentation folders, project logs; a year-end summary will be shared with the Board and included in the Annual Report.

Objective and Measures related to Dissemination (required):

Objective: HCCPS will disseminate best practices to our sending District Public Schools	
<p>Measure: Partner with at least one other public school District (e.g. Easthampton Public Schools, Northampton Public Schools) to share best practices regarding one of the key design elements (e.g., arts integration, civic action, school culture).</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Name of partner district(s) and description of partnership activities ● Best practices related to the key design element shared <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning ● When: Annually, by the end of the school year (May–June) ● Where: Documentation maintained in administrative dissemination records, with summary included in the Annual Report and shared with the Board of Trustees
<p>Measure: Annually publish at least one integrated unit per grade band to the website and/or community newsletter.</p>	<p>Data to be reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of integrated projects published, by grade band (K, 1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 7–8) ● Title and brief description of each project ● Platform(s) where projects were published (e.g., school website, newsletter, curriculum-sharing network) <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who: Director of Teaching and Learning, in collaboration with classroom teachers ● When: projects collected and published by June of each school year ● Where: projects will be uploaded to the school website and archived in a dissemination folder on the school drive; publication will be referenced in the Annual Report

HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

July 31, 2025

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Letter from the President of the Board of Trustees

This past year has been one of meaningful transition and renewal at Hilltown, marked by thoughtful reflection, collaborative planning, and foundational changes designed to strengthen our school for years to come.

In response to the departure of our two previous co-directors, the Board of Trustees revisited a long-discussed question: how best to structure school leadership to meet the evolving needs of our students, staff, and families. After careful consideration, the Board approved a new leadership model, establishing a Head of School who reports directly to the Board, and a Director of Teaching and Learning who oversees teaching staff and reports to the Head of School. This adjustment, along with other refinements to the administrative structure, has allowed for a more balanced distribution of responsibilities and more targeted support for both student learning and staff development.

Equally important has been our collective progress on the school's five-year Long Range Plan. One major outcome of that work—developed through extensive input from faculty, families, and staff—was the adoption of a new grade alignment structure, which will be implemented in the 2025–2026 academic year. Under this plan, Hilltown will move away from a standalone 6th grade and instead establish a standalone kindergarten while other grades will continue to be mixed grades with combinations of 1st/2nd, 3rd/4th, 5th/6th, and 7th/8th grades. We believe this structure will support curricular coherence, social development, as well as the community building that is central to Hilltown's mission. In parallel, the new grade structure has allowed Hilltown to introduce and expand staff positions to better meet student needs and advance Hilltown's commitment to interdisciplinary learning and arts integration. These include the addition of an Academic Skills teacher for grades 5-8, a Math Specialist for all grades, expansion of Technology and Spanish instruction to now include grades K-5 and 5/6, respectively, and an addition of a full time Drama specialist as part of the integration team for all grades. The restructuring also includes the creation of in-house positions for a part-time school psychologist, occupational therapist, and speech-language pathologist, roles that were previously filled by contracted providers, as part of a broader effort to strengthen our Special Education and Related Services (SERS) department and increase consistency and continuity of care for students.

The school has also undertaken a necessary and exciting renovation of its playground to better serve students' physical development, play, and well-being across all grade levels. While investing in these improvements, we remain firmly committed to fiscal responsibility and have successfully engaged the Hilltown community in partially supporting these efforts through fundraising.

As we look ahead, the Board, school leaders, and Hilltown community as a whole remain committed to ensuring that Hilltown remains true to the mission and values upon which its charter was founded, while continuously evolving to meet the needs of our students and community.

Sincerely,



Lily Newman

Introduction to the School

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Easthampton
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	Amherst, Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Central Berkshire, Chesterfield-Goshen, Conway, Deerfield, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier, Gateway, Gill Montague, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampshire, Hatfield, Hawlemont, Leverett, Mohawk Trail, New Salem-Wendell, Northampton, Orange, Pelham, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar, Rowe, Shutesbury, Southampton, South Hadley, Sunderland, Ware, Westhampton, Whately, Williamsburg
Year Opened	1995	Year(s) Renewed	2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020, 2025
Maximum Enrollment	218	Chartered Grade Span	K-8
<p>Mission Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning • To sustain a cooperative intimate community of students, staff, families, and local community members which guides and supports the school and its education program • To cultivate children’s individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us 			

Faithfulness to Charter

Criterion 1: Mission and Key Design Elements

HCCPS continues to engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning

- Students participated in integrated, arts-based projects documented through the school's Integration Archive.
- Regular opportunities for hands-on learning in Atelier, music, PE, science, and social studies projects were implemented across grade levels.
- 8th graders successfully completed interdisciplinary culminating projects based on their personal interests, demonstrating research, writing, and presentation skills.
- Student responses to the climate survey indicated increased recognition of inclusive curriculum content
- Family surveys affirmed high levels of student engagement and appreciation for arts-integrated and experiential learning opportunities.

HCCPS continues to sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families, and local community members which guides and supports the school and its education program

- The 2025 Family and Caregiver Feedback Survey indicated that the vast majority of respondents feel welcome and connected to the school community.
- Students reporting they had at least one trusted adult at school rose sharply, indicating strengthened relationships between staff and students..
- Events such as Winter Fair, All School, and Mini-courses supported intergenerational and cross-grade connections.
- Hilltown continued to practice collaborative decision making and Board-level governance by consensus.

HCCPS continues to support children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us

- In the 2025 Student Climate Survey, over 95% of students report that their teachers care about them, and the sense of belonging among students rose 17% this year
- Students expressed improved trust that adults will intervene when harm occurs, suggesting growing confidence in restorative, student-centered discipline practices.
- A student government and structured affinity groups were implemented this year, increasing student agency and peer-to-peer leadership.
- Morning meetings, All School performances, and student-led initiatives continued to offer platforms for student voice.
- The curriculum emphasized diverse perspectives, as evidenced by increased student perception of cultural representation and equitable learning environments.

Amendments to the Charter between August 2024 and July 2025

Date Submitted	Amendment Requested	Status (Pending/ Approved/Denied/Approved, Not Implemented)
<p>On July 23, 2024, the board of trustees of Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School submitted a request for commissioner approval of a change in governance/leadership structure and revised bylaws. The school's revised governance/leadership structure has the board overseeing one school leader, the Head of School, instead of two directors. The board's bylaws have been updated to reflect the change in governance/leadership structure.</p> <p>Status: Approved on August 12, 2024</p>		

Criterion 2: Access and Equity

Student Demographic Information

The most recent publicly available student enrollment data may be found on the DESE website in [Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity \(2024-25\)](#).

Student Data by Race/Ethnicity (2024-25)	
Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Student Body
African American	0%
Asian	2.8%
Hispanic	8.7%
Native American	0%
White	78.4%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	10.1%

The most recent publicly available student demographic data may be found on the DESE website in [Selected Populations \(2024-25\)](#).

Selected Student Populations (2024-25)	
Title	Percentage of Student Body
First Language not English	0%
English Language Learner	0%
Low-income	18.8%
Students with Disabilities	22.0%
High Needs	34.4%

The most recent publicly available student discipline data may be found on the DESE website in our [2023-24 Student Discipline Data Report](#)

2023-24 Student Discipline					
Student Group	Total Number of Students	Students Disciplined	Percent In-School Suspension	Percent Out-of-School Suspension	Percent Emergency Removal
All Students	219	12	5.5	1.4	0
English Learner	0	-	-	-	-
Low Income	44	5	-	-	-
Students w/disabilities	56	5	-	-	-
High needs	82	8	9.8	3.7	0
Female	94	1	-	-	-
Male	118	10	8.5	2.5	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	-	-	-	-
Asian	6	-	-	-	-
African American/Black	0	-	-	-	-
Hispanic/Latino	16	3	-	-	-
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	21	2	-	-	-
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	-	-	-	-
White	176	7	4	1.1	0

Discipline Overview

Hilltown continues to emphasize proactive, restorative approaches to student behavior and maintains low suspension rates. During the 2023–2024 school year, there were 3 out-of-school suspensions and 12 in-school suspensions.

The school’s three-tiered system of support and accountability—central to its broader **MTSS framework** and aligned with priorities outlined in Hilltown’s **Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Action Plan**—remained a core part of behavior support in 2023-24:

- **Tier 1: Universal supports** promote shared expectations, self-regulation skills, and community connection for all students.
- **Tier 2: Targeted supports** provide individualized strategies and interventions for students needing additional behavioral support.

- **Tier 3: Emergency response** addresses behavior that is significantly unsafe or disruptive, with protocols for immediate safety, follow-up, and restoration.
The **Student Behavior Support Coordinator**, added in March 2023 as part of SOA-funded staffing improvements, assumed leadership of Tier 2 interventions. This role included designing individualized plans, collaborating with classroom teams, and coordinating with families and service providers.

As part of the school’s MTSS implementation goals, Hilltown expanded its use of behavioral data to identify trends, strengthen Tier 1 supports, and guide professional development. These systems support the school’s goal of improving student outcomes through more equitable, inclusive, and responsive learning environments.

Looking ahead, Hilltown will continue to strengthen restorative practices, expand staff training, and deepen Tier 2/3 systems as part of its ongoing SOA and MTSS efforts.

Criterion 4: Dissemination

The table below provides evidence of how Hilltown has shared innovative models for replication and best practices with other public schools in the region during the 2024-2025 school year.

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Collaboration with caregivers to build a strong community	Presentation to Master of Arts in Teaching students	Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning Tiffany Ross, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator	Smith College Master of Arts in Teaching Program	Students incorporated strategies into their practicums in order to support them in meeting proficiency standards for collaboration and student well-being

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Civic action learning	Meetings with administrators from Easthampton High School, Mountain View School (Easthampton's public K-8 school) and the Institute for Humane Education, visiting a Civics Action Showcase at Mountain View School	Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning Chris Kusek, Head of School Susan Welson, Assistant Principal, Easthampton High school	Easthampton High School, Mountain View School	We developed the framework for a plan to co-train our teachers alongside 3 teachers from Mountain View, and share our projects as part of a Civics Action initiative during the 25-26 school year.
Use of primary sources, and inquiry based learning	Piloted Civic Virtues lessons from iCivics in collaboration with the author of the civic virtues collection, and professor of education at Westfield State University	Nan Childs, Grade 2-3 Lead Teacher Julianne Clarke, Grade 2-3 Lead Teacher Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning	Westfield State University (WSU)	Professor Risler shared her experiences observing and guest teaching at Hilltown with pre-service teachers at Westfield State.
Planning of integrated arts curriculum and implementation, collaboration with special educators and arts specialists, classroom management	Hosted two full-year graduate interns from Smith College	Missy Kubacka, Grade 4-5 Lead Teacher Kate Saccento, K-5 Special Education Teacher	Smith College	Graduate interns will use their experience at Hilltown as they establish their own teaching practices in new school settings moving forward

Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with the dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of dissemination
Inquiry based PD	Teacher Leader team meetings with educator from Easthampton high school	Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning Chris Kusek, Head of School Kerri Pollard, Andrea Hearn, Nicole Singer, Grace Mrowicki; Teacher Leaders	Easthampton High School	Plans to implement an inquiry based PD cycle with an emphasis on Learning Walks
Visual arts curriculum planning and implementation, arts integration, classroom management, teacher/staff collaboration	Hosted student teacher, visual arts	Nicole Singer, Visual Arts Teacher, grades 2-8	Preservice visual arts teacher from UMass Amherst	A teacher new to the field gained curriculum and classroom experience, and learned about the HCCPS program
Integrated arts curriculum, collaboration with special educators and arts specialists, classroom management	Hosted Smith College Mindich Fellow	Kerri Pollard, Kindergarten Lead Teacher Joseph Golossi, Grade 7-8 Lead ELA teacher	Undergraduate students from Smith College	A college student who is interested in pursuing education as a career gained classroom experience, and learned about the HCCPS program
Arts integration with content area learning standards	Art Show at Easthampton City Space (planned for August 2, 2025)	Cyndy Sperry, Visual Arts Teacher, grades 7-8 Nicole Singer, Visual Arts Teacher, grades 2-8	Easthampton City Arts+, the Easthampton community	We built on a partnership with a local city arts organization. This offered an opportunity for art by Hilltown students to be highly visible in our host city.

Academic Program Success

Criterion 5: Student Performance

The most recent publicly available student performance data may be found on the DESE website in our [2024 School Report Card](#).

Hilltown uses a range of internal assessments to monitor student learning and support academic growth in addition to statewide MCAS testing. In 2024–25, the school administered FastBridge aReading and aMath assessments in grades 3–8, screening all students in the fall, winter, and spring. These data points helped teachers identify students in need of additional support and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions over time. In grades K–3, the reading specialist conducted triannual assessments using DIBELS 8th Edition to monitor early literacy development and inform foundational reading instruction. To support students’ social-emotional and behavioral development, all students in grades 3–8 participated in the mySAEBRS universal screener. Results were reviewed by the school’s Adjustment Counselor, who coordinated targeted support for students flagged as needing additional SEL intervention.

In addition to these standardized tools, teachers across grade levels used a variety of formative and summative assessments, including rubrics, benchmarks, unit tests, and checklists, to evaluate student understanding in all core content areas. Daily formative assessments built into the math curriculum allowed teachers to adjust instruction responsively. Student writing was assessed using standardized rubrics at all grade levels: K–5 teachers used an internally developed writing rubric, while middle school teachers assessed writing with common rubrics, including for the extensive eighth-grade capstone research project. Special education teachers and related service providers, including the reading specialist, used both standardized assessments and individualized measures to track progress on student learning goals.

While Hilltown’s use of FastBridge and DIBELS is still relatively new, initial trends from year-to-year and seasonal screening indicate that student performance data is increasingly being used to inform timely instructional decisions. Teachers and support staff regularly reviewed assessment data to monitor progress and respond to emerging academic, behavioral, and social-emotional concerns. These reviews, along with weekly grade-level planning, integration meetings between academic and arts staff, and regular collaboration through the MTSS and SERS teams, ensured that assessment results were consistently informing schoolwide instructional and intervention strategies. Although Hilltown does not currently conduct formal comparative analysis of internal assessments with peer schools, tools like FastBridge and DIBELS provide access to national benchmarks that help contextualize student performance. Disaggregated subgroup analysis (e.g., for students with disabilities and English learners) is typically addressed through case review and collaborative problem-solving, and the school plans to deepen formal analysis of subgroup data in the coming year.

Hilltown will include relevant data tables and visuals in the Appendix E, including FastBridge and DIBELS results by grade level and student group, as well as summary charts from the mySAEBRS screener. These tools continue to play a central role in advancing the school’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports and ensuring that all students are engaged, supported, and challenged.

Criterion 6: Program Delivery

Hilltown continued to deliver a high-quality academic program in 2024–2025, grounded in both state standards and the school’s mission to foster creativity, collaboration, and hands-on, interdisciplinary learning. Teachers designed relevant and engaging curriculum that reflected the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks while also integrating the arts, encouraging student voice, and cultivating community. Instructional units were guided by overarching learning objectives, allowing students to make connections across content areas and explore themes through multiple modalities. Teachers employed a range of strategies to differentiate instruction and support diverse learning profiles, using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure that all students had multiple pathways to access content, express understanding, and engage meaningfully in learning.

Hilltown maintained its core literacy and mathematics programs this year, including all literacy programs from the Collaborative Classroom, “Being a Reader” (grades K–5), “Being a Writer,” and a teacher-created, standards-aligned ELA curriculum (grades 6–8), supplemented by integrated writing assignments and independent book groups. Teachers also scored student writing using standardized rubrics, including an internal K–5 writing rubric and a portfolio-based approach in middle school, culminating in an 8th-grade capstone research project. In mathematics, the school continued its use of the Illustrative Math curriculum (grades K–8), now in its fourth year for lower grades and seventh for upper grades. Teachers supplemented math instruction with tools such as Math 180, 3-Act Math, Esti-Mysteries, and daily number routines during morning meetings. Across grades, curriculum design emphasized real-world application and collaboration, with science and social studies content often serving as vehicles for arts integration and culturally responsive instruction. Examples from the year included units on Northeast Woodland Native Americans, sound waves, the human body, ancient Greece and civilizations, world religions, and national parks, with support from curricula such as Mystery Science, iCivics, Children Discovering Justice, and Facing History and Ourselves. Academic and arts learning was regularly shared with the community through All School gatherings, where two classrooms or grade-levels presented each week.

Students in all grades also received instruction in art, music and movement, physical education, and wellness one to two times per week, with curricula aligned to state frameworks. Middle school students participated in digital media and technology classes twice weekly, while 7th and 8th graders studied Spanish three times per week. The two-year Spanish sequence is designed to approximate a first-year high school Spanish course.

Teachers created classrooms that were academically rich and supportive of students’ social-emotional development, emphasizing learner identity, effort, and growth mindset. Many teachers incorporated collaborative learning routines and strategies to foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. Across classrooms, teachers maintained clear expectations and norms, and addressed interpersonal challenges in ways that balanced accountability and support. Success criteria were shared with students through tools like rubrics, checklists, and examples to promote transparency, self-direction, and clarity around learning goals.

To meet the needs of all learners, Hilltown employed a robust support model. Every classroom was staffed with at least one teaching assistant, who supported instruction, accommodations, and behavior interventions, including those outlined in 504 plans and IEPs. Special education services were delivered by three full-time and one part-time special educator, with related services provided by speech and occupational therapists, the adjustment counselor, and the reading specialist. The reading specialist

provided early literacy interventions, particularly in K–3, using SIPPS and Read Naturally, and special educators implemented more intensive interventions such as Orton-Gillingham.

Hilltown’s academic program reflects a deep and ongoing commitment to equity and inclusion. As part of its strategic plan and in response to the 2022 equity audit, the school prioritized belonging and partnership—particularly for students and families of color. In 2024–25, the school saw significant gains in student-reported feelings of belonging and connection across demographic groups, reflecting the impact of sustained efforts to create a more inclusive and supportive environment. This progress was supported by increased opportunities for student voice, including emergent affinity groups, and the continued leadership of the Board of Trustees’ Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee. Additionally, Hilltown was awarded a DESE Safe and Supportive Schools planning grant that resulted in a multi-year action plan including the formation of a Teacher Leadership Team and the expansion of structured student voice opportunities, including a revived Student Council.

In summary, Hilltown’s 2024–25 program demonstrated its continued commitment to academic rigor, inclusive instruction, and a learning environment that honors the whole child.

Organizational Viability

Criterion 10: Finance

Hilltown Co-op Charter Public School
Unaudited FY25
Statement of Revenues, Expenses
and Changes in Net Position
July 2024 through June 2025

Operating Revenues	
Tuition	3,851,183
Government Grants	96,744
Private Grants	6,926
Medicaid & Other Reimbursements	10,622
After School Fees	99,599
Student Activity Fees	43,270
School Lunch Receipts	21,529
Total Operating Revenue	<u><u>4,129,873</u></u>
Operating Expenses	
Wages	2,794,651
Payroll Taxes	116,418
Fringe Benefits	395,971
Consulting & Contracted Services	243,364
Depreciation Expense	106,385
Dues & Subscriptions	10,905
Educational Supplies & Textbooks	46,370
Equipment	15,339
Food Services	30,102
Instructional Technology	15,423
Occupancy	196,791
Transportation & Field Trips	14,286
Other Operating Expense	21,917
Total Operating Expenses	<u><u>4,007,921</u></u>
Operating Income (Loss)	<u><u>121,952</u></u>
Non Operating Revenues & (Expenses)	
Fundraising Income	33,882
Investment Income	26,487
Interest Expense	(85,251)
Fundraising Expense	(1,279)
Total Non-Operating Revenues	<u><u>(26,161)</u></u>
Change in Net Position	<u><u>95,792</u></u>

(Balance Sheet)
As of June 30, 2025

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	466,140
Certificate of Deposit	498,445
Prepaid Expenses	21,086
Revenue Receivable	200
Total Current Assets	985,871

Non-Current Assets

Capital Assets	
Building (Net)	2,858,918
Land 1-3 Industrial Pkwy	472,975
Furniture and Equipment (Net)	1,796
Security Deposits	7,279
Total Non Current Assets	3,340,967

Total Assets

4,326,838

Liabilities & Net Position

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	88,146
Accrued Wages Payable	247,829
Accrued Payroll Liability	(6,568)
Accrued Expenses	6,088
Deferred Revenue	992
Total Current Liabilities	336,487

Long Term Liabilities

Note Payable - USDA	3,066,691
Total Long Term Liabilities	3,066,691

Total Liabilities

3,403,178

Net Position

Investment in Capital Assets	266,997
Unrestricted	656,663
Total Net Position	923,660

Total Liabilities and Net Position

4,326,838

**Hilltown Co-operative Charter Public School
Approved FY26 Budget**

Approved by Board of Trustees 05/14/2025

	FY 26
Operating Revenues	
Tuition	3,929,076
Government Grants	82,734
Private Grants	0
Medicaid & Other Reimbursements	8,000
After School Fees	68,500
Student Activity Fees	36,500
School Lunch Receipts	15,000
Total Operating Revenue	4,139,810
Operating Expenses	
Wages	2,998,887
Payroll Taxes	117,130
Fringe Benefits	444,199
Consulting & Contracted Services	97,028
Dues & Subscriptions	11,785
Educational Supplies & Textbooks	70,576
Equipment	6,000
Food Services	20,000
Instructional Technology	18,000
Occupancy	224,611
Transportation & Field Trips	14,500
Other Operating Expense	51,050
Total Operating Expenses	4,073,766
Operating Income (Loss)	66,044
Non Operating Revenues & (Expenses)	
Fundraising Income	7,000
Investment Income	12,000
Interest Expense	(83,544)
Fundraising Expense	(1,500)
Total Non-Operating Revenues	(66,044)
Change in Net Position	0

FY26 Enrollment Table	Enter Number Below
Number of students pre-enrolled via March 15, 2025 submission	218
Number of students upon which FY25 budget tuition line is based	218
Number of expected students for FY25 first day of school	218

Capital Plans

Hilltown’s major capital project for FY25 was the renovation of the school playground, a long-planned initiative aimed at enhancing outdoor learning and recreation for all students. The project began in earnest during the 2024–25 school year and included demolition of the existing structure, purchase and installation of new equipment, site preparation, landscaping, and resurfacing. Designed with input from staff, families, and students, the new playground reflects the school’s commitment to cooperation, inclusion, and community connection. Students also contributed to an environmental education component by designing art-integrated wetland boundary markers, blending science and stewardship.

Construction is scheduled for summer 2025. Demolition occurred in May, and installation of new equipment is set for late July. Final vendor payments will be completed in FY26. The total estimated cost of the project is approximately \$170,500. As of February 2025, just under \$73,000 had been paid, with the remaining balance due in the upcoming fiscal year. The project is being funded through a combination of capital reserves and more than \$20,000 in private fundraising by the Friends of Hilltown. The school also benefited from in-kind support, including demolition services donated by IUOE Local 98.

Looking ahead, Hilltown has one additional capital improvement planned for FY26. To improve safety and alleviate congestion during drop-off and pick-up, the school will add a dedicated exit lane from the main parking lot. The new 18-foot curb cut will provide a second egress point, reducing bottlenecks and supporting a safer flow of traffic for students, families, and staff. The project will be completed by Duffy Willard Paving & Excavating, LLC and is pending final permit approval from the Easthampton Department of Public Works. The cost is estimated at \$7,500 and will be drawn from existing capital reserves.

Project Description	Current Status	Estimated Date of Completion	Estimated Cost	How is/will this project be financed?
Playground renovation (equipment, demolition, installation, landscaping, surfacing)	In progress. Installation scheduled for July 2025	July 2025, with final payments in FY26	\$170,500	Capital reserves and private fundraising (Friends of Hilltown)
Addition of dedicated parking lot exit (new curb cut and paving)	Planned. Pending final permit approval	Fall 2025 (FY26)	\$7,500	Capital reserves

Appendix A: Accountability Plan Evidence 2024-25

Hilltown’s current accountability plan may be accessed here: [ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN](#)

Faithfulness to Charter

Measure	2024-2025 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Objective (for KDE 1): Hilltown students and their families will participate in the life of the school through classrooms, community events, and school governance.		
<p>Measure: 90% of families who respond to the annual satisfaction survey will report that there exists a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families. At least 40% of families will complete the survey. 80% of the families measured will match school demographics.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: 97% of the 63 families who responded to our annual caregiver feedback survey “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” that Hilltown has built a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families.</p>
<p>Measure: 100% of students in grades K-8 will participate in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community, including weekly All School gatherings, year-long cross-grade buddies, mixed-age lunchroom assignments, and mixed-age mini-courses at least 3 times per year.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community, including weekly All School meetings, year-long cross-grade buddies, and three sessions of mixed-age mini-courses.</p>
<p>Measure: 90% of families, with proportionate representation of the school demographics, will engage in one or more whole-school community events or programs: Winter Fair, Solstice Celebration, Music Festival, Grandparents and Special Elders Day, “Link Families” for incoming families.</p>	NM	<p>Evidence: While we did not systematically collect participation data disaggregated by demographic subgroups, we experienced a clear resurgence of family engagement in school-wide community events throughout the year. Anecdotal evidence and staff observations indicate strong attendance and enthusiasm at key events such as the Winter Fair, Solstice Celebration, and the Spring Music Festival. We also reestablished our “Link Families” program for new families, which was met with positive feedback. In future years, we plan to implement more</p>

		robust tracking systems to better measure both overall participation and proportional representation.
Objective: (for KDE 2): Hilltown students will access learning by participating in interdisciplinary projects that integrate the arts and incorporate hands-on learning.		
<p>Measure: Annually, 95% of students will engage in hands-on units of study that have been co-created by multiple teachers integrating three or more disciplines. The integrated units of study are guided by essential questions arrived at through a collaborative process drawing on state standards.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in hands-on units of study created during grade-level Integration Meetings that included academic, music, and visual arts teachers (plus the technology teacher in grades 6-8). Presentations and artifacts from arts-integrated units and featured studies are shared on Hilltown’s website: https://www.hilltowncharter.org/arts-integrated-projects/</p>
<p>Measure: Annually, 95% of K-8 students will share their artwork with the whole school (via All School gathering presentations, gallery displays, or musical/theater productions). These sharings will be accompanied by integration statements (written or spoken by students or teachers) explaining how their art interacts with other ideas and disciplines in the featured projects.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: 100% of students shared their artwork with the whole school. Slideshows were shown in All School (our weekly whole-school gathering) where teachers and students also shared statements explaining the projects. Rotating exhibits of student work were displayed in the hallways throughout the year, accompanied by write-ups about each display. Students in all grades performed for the school community at the annual Music Festival in May.</p>
Objective (for KDE 3): Hilltown students will demonstrate deep learning that requires critical thinking and personal expression.		
<p>Measure: Each 8th grader will design, develop, and present an independent interdisciplinary culminating project in an area of personal interest. This will demonstrate research, writing, and presentation skills learned from the HCCPS experience.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: Each 8th grader designed, developed, and presented an independent research project in an area of personal interest. All projects demonstrated research, writing, and presentation skills. <i>See TABLE 1 for list of research questions</i></p>

<p>Measure: 100% of students in grades K-8 will participate in mixed age mini-courses. K-6 will participate 3 times a year; grades 7 & 8 will participate 2 times a year. Students will have the opportunity to express their mini-course top choices through surveys.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: 100% of K-8 students participated in 3-4-week mini courses three times during the year. Mini course enrollment was based on student requests. <i>See TABLE 2 for list of mini courses</i></p>
<p>Objective (for KDE 4): Hilltown students will demonstrate proficiency on external and internal academic measures.</p>		
<p>Measure: Each grade, 3-8, will score in the top quartile annually in the tested areas of reading and math and core total on the SAT10 test of basic skills. The students in the top quartile will reflect all demographics of the student population in grades 3-8.</p>	<p>M/N</p>	<p>Evidence: Hilltown switched to Fastbridge “aReading” and “aMath” screening assessments in 2022. Based on available reports, we define “top quartile” for the purpose of this annual report as 75 percent or more students scoring at or above the national 50th percentile on the Spring 2025 assessment (or most recent) <i>See Table 3 for aggregated results</i></p> <p>aReading at or above 50th percentile: Grade 3: 86% Grade 4: 82% Grade 5: 68% Grade 6: 85% Grade 7: 77% Grade 8: 74%</p> <p>aMath at or above 50th percentile: Grade 3: 77% Grade 4: 68% Grade 5: 45% Grade 6: 70% Grade 7: 71% Grade 8: 76%</p>
<p>Measure: 80% of all students in grades K-3 will annually gain one grade level in reading and writing skills as measured by both nationally recognized and internal benchmark assessments. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the demographics of our K-3 student body.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: Met or exceeded grade-level end-of-year DIBELS core composite benchmark GRADES K-3: 81% Met or exceed grade-level proficiency target on internal writing assessments GRADES K-3: 88% <i>See Table 3 for aggregated results</i></p>

<p>Measure: Annually, 80% of all students in grades 4-8 will demonstrate proficiency in writing on the HCCPS upper grades writing assessment. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the demographics of our 4-8 student body.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: Met grade-level proficiency target on internal writing assessments GRADES 4-8: 86% <i>See Table 3 for aggregated results</i></p>
<p>Measure: Annually, 80% of all students in grades K-8 will demonstrate proficiency on end-of-unit math assessments. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the demographics of our K-8 student body.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: Average scores on end-of-unit math assessments 70% or higher GRADES K-8: 94% <i>See Table 3 for aggregated results</i></p>
<p>Measure: 100% of 8th Grade students will achieve a passing score on the Grade 8 culminating project rubric.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: 100% of 8th grade students achieved a passing score on culminating project rubrics. <i>See Table 3 for aggregated results</i></p>
<p align="center">Objective: Members of the Board of Trustees and the school Directors will demonstrate responsive leadership with respect to the broader community of stakeholders (staff, students, families, and local community).</p>		
<p>Measure: Board of Trustees decisions will be made using a consensus model of decision making at least 90% of the time as indicated in Board minutes. Majority votes will only be taken if consensus cannot be reached in a timely manner.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: All new Board members are trained on the consensus model of decision. Board minutes document the decision-making mechanism used for each Board decision. The 2024-2025 approved Board minutes are posted on the school's website.</p>
<p>Measure: The Directors will work cooperatively to manage and guide the school. They will collaborate with the Board of Trustees through a Domain Council that meets bi-weekly throughout the school year. The Domain consists of the President and Vice President of the Board, as well as the Directors of the school.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: The Domain Council schedule of meetings and minutes demonstrates how the Directors collaborated effectively to share the responsibilities of school governance. The Domain Council met regularly throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Minutes from these meetings are included in the Board packets, which are available on the school website.</p>

TABLE 1: Eighth Grade Project Research Questions, Spring 2025

8th Grade Project Research Questions	
How did major events in history affect blade making in Japan?	How are Orcas affected by captivity?
What were important periods in Japanese history that led to new traditions being introduced into the culture?	How have collegiate dance teams evolved over time?
How can teens 13-17 years old earn money through traditional business, online business, and investing in the modern age?	What challenges are coffee workers facing, and how do those affect the industry?
What is the best way to optimize muscle growth and strength?	The history of alternative fashion and what it means.
Why are Rhythm Games fun to play, and how do they help patients in the medical field?	How did the misinformation and lack of emergency response affect the people and the environment surrounding the Chernobyl plant?
What strategies do casinos use to make money and make guests stay longer?	How does CPR work?
What leads people to deny genocide against clear evidence? Why do people deny genocides and what are the effects of such rhetoric?	How has the integration of technology transformed woodworking techniques and practices over time?
Do we treat animals in zoos humanely?	Evolution of sneakers
How do the blind use braille in their daily lives?	How have major developments in history impacted forensic science?
How does professional dance affect one's mental, physical and financial health?	How is China committing genocide and taking away Tibetans' rights and freedoms?
How has stigma impacted the treatment of individuals with bipolar disorder over the past 100 years?	How did Turkey hide the Armenian genocide?
How has surfing evolved over time?	How do animals help people in the medical industry?
How AI and social media are affecting the art world?	How have different styles of animation developed and evolved over the years?
How did the Bubonic Plague affect different social classes?	

TABLE 2: Mini Course Offerings, 2024-2025

Board Game Club Grades K-8	Logic Puzzle Adventures (K-8):
Origami Grades K-8	Unique Drinks You Can Make (K-8):
Creative Movement Grades K-8	Strategy Games, Riddles and Puzzles (K-8)
Cook the Books Grades K-8	Icky, Messy, Goopy (K-6):
Nature Journaling Grades 2-8	Cardboard Creations (K-8):
Puzzles with Missy Grades 2-8	Alotta Hoopla (K-8):
Yoga and Meditation, Grade K-8	English for Time Travelers (4-8)
Check Mates, Grades 2-8	Get Moving (4-8)
Mini-Comic/Zine Workshop, Grades 2-8	Conversation, Compassion and Cookies: Learn How to Listen like a Pro (6-8)
Magical Creatures K-8	Magic the Gathering (6-8)
Card Games Grades K-8	Pinch Pots (K-8)
Choose Your Own Adventure Grades K-8	Fun with Puppets (K-8)
Hackey-sack Grades 4-8	Snack Attack! (K-8)
Topics in Classical Piracy (Pirate School!) Grades 2-8	Spring Schoolyard Enhancements (3-8)
Empowerment Self Defense Grades 2-5	Drawing and Coloring (K-8)
Latin Dance Party Grades 2-8	Check Mates (2-8)
Save the Kingdom Grades 6-8	Rube Goldberg Machines (K-8)
Mini Piñatas (K-8):	Design! Build! Challenge! (K-8)
Il Teatro Clinic (K-8):	LEGOMANIA (K-8)
Dolls and Dolls (K-8)	Help the Birds (K-8)
Winter Wonder (K-8)	Calligraphy (K-8)
STEM Challenges (K-8):	Pickleball (2-8)
Fitness Stations (K-8)	Photography (K-8)

TABLE 3: Students meeting proficiency on 2024-25 assessment measures

Assessment name	Number of students assessed	Number of students meeting proficiency target	% of students meeting proficiency target
Fastbridge aReading (gr 3-8)	155	125	81%
Fastbridge aMath (gr 3-8)	155	108	70%
DIBELS (gr K-3)	84	68	81%
HCCPS Writing assessment (gr K-3)	84	74	88%
HCCPS Writing assessment (gr 4-8)	134	115	86%
HCCPS Math assessment (gr K-8)	218	205	94%
Grade 8 Cuminating Project	27	27	100%

Hilltown did not fully meet one accountability measure related to student achievement in mathematics. Specifically, in grades 3-8, 70% of students scored at or above the national 50th percentile on the Spring 2025 Fastbridge assessment, missing our goal of 75%. Due to a change in our student information system at the end of FY25, disaggregating by subgroup was not feasible. However, informal analysis indicates that there are still obvious disparities in achievement for our students with disabilities, as well as less marked, but still significant achievement gaps between white and BIPOC students. To close these gaps, the school is implementing several new initiatives for the 2025-26 school year. These include investments in inclusion practices, with substantial training on best practices in co-teaching. Additionally, a full time math specialist has been hired, and our reading specialist has increased to full time. We will roll out a new student information system, Infinite Campus, in 2025-26 that will allow us to better analyze data by subgroups moving forward.

Dissemination

Measure	2024-2025 Performance M (Met) NM (Not Met)	Evidence
Objective: Hilltown will share best practices with the local educational communities.		
<p>Measure: The school will host an Open House each year, during which teachers will highlight key design elements in practice.</p>	M	<p>Evidence: We hosted 1 online information session before our admissions lottery and 2 in-person information sessions, one dedicated to kindergarten families, and the other for students entering grades 1-8. This new strategy allowed us to offer more targeted information for each audience and received positive feedback from staff and families.</p>

<p>Measure: The school will partner with an area college or university to develop a model program for training teachers.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: We revitalized our partnership with Smith College by hosting two full-year internships for aspiring teachers in our lower grades. We are excited to continue this collaboration and to explore opportunities for expanding similar partnerships with other colleges across the Pioneer Valley.</p>
<p>Measure: The school will use its website to disseminate information on integration projects. One project per grade level band per year will be highlighted.</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: Each grade level band has an integrated project from 2024-2025 represented on the Hilltown website: https://www.hilltowncharter.org/arts-integrated-projects/</p>
<p>Measure: Annual evening workshop featuring key design elements (e.g., building community in a K-8 school or arts-integrated curriculum projects).</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>Evidence: We held our annual Meeting of the Cooperative in person on March 26, 2025. The evening program focused on what it means to be a cooperative school. We had over 60 participants in attendance, and all participants had the opportunity to engage in small group discussions about current practices as a cooperative school, and ideas to deepen and expand our cooperative identity. Discussion prompts emphasized how to be most inclusive as a cooperative, and how to best offer various access points for family volunteers. Ideas generated in these discussions were recorded and synthesized by our Community and Family Engagement coordinator. In addition to the discussion component of the meeting, there were performances by the elementary chorus, the 6-8 a capella singing group, as well as our student Rock Band. There was also student artwork on display.</p>

Appendix B: Recruitment and Retention Plan 2025-26

Recruitment Plan 2025-26

2024- 25 Implementation Summary:

Interest in enrollment at Hilltown remains strong. For the upcoming school year, Hilltown received **247 applications** across all grade levels. Applications were disaggregated by grade and reviewed to ensure broad outreach and accessibility.

We continued outreach to local institutions and community organizations, particularly those serving low-income and immigrant families, to reach target populations where our school has historically fallen below Comparison Index (CI) percentages. Efforts included:

- Two information sessions: one virtual via Zoom and one in-person open house at the school
- Printed outreach flyers in English and Spanish distributed through preschools, social service agencies, and local businesses
- Paid social media campaigns and local newspaper advertising

We continued our practice of offering sibling preference in the admissions lottery to support family continuity. **Five of our newly admitted students were siblings** of currently enrolled students. While sibling preference supports family cohesion, it does reduce the number of available spots for new applicants, particularly in Kindergarten, which remains our largest entry point.

Upper-grade recruitment remains a challenge. Despite renewed outreach efforts, including a supplemental lottery on **July 31, 2024**, we continue to see fewer applications and a higher decline rate for grades 7 and 8. However, the supplemental lottery did yield several new 7th-grade enrollments for the 2024-25 school year.

In response to longstanding enrollment trends and to improve long-term retention, we strategically **shifted our recruitment focus to grade 5** to support a newly configured **5/6 combined classroom**. This change aligns with our internal grade restructuring and is intended to increase continuity across middle school years, reducing the need to rely heavily on 7th- and 8th-grade recruitment, where students are less likely to change schools.

At the time of this report, we have not yet completed the full registration process, so we do not have confirmed disability, English learner, or income status data for all newly admitted students.

We remain committed to inclusive recruitment practices and welcome continued conversation with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education about strategies to reach underrepresented populations.

General Recruitment Activities for 2025-26:

Activity 1: Community Outreach Campaign

We continued distributing bilingual flyers to community organizations, preschools, and businesses serving families in Hampshire and Franklin counties. Flyers will include invitations to our Zoom information session and in-person open house, and will emphasize our commitment to serving students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students.

Activity 2: Preschool Outreach

We again partnered with enrolled families to outreach to local preschools and promote our information sessions prior to the application deadline.

Activity 3: Virtual Information Session

A Zoom-based session was held and promoted on the school’s website and social media and all materials highlighted that Hilltown serves all students, including students with IEPs, ELs, and low-income families.

Activity 4: In-Person Open House

We hosted an evening open house where prospective families and preschool providers can meet with staff and tour the school. Promotional materials were distributed in English and Spanish and made available online.

We will also continue to:

- Maintain a welcoming admissions webpage with Google Translate integration
- Translate key materials into Spanish
- Explicitly state in all materials that Hilltown serves all students

Chart Data	2024-25 Strategies
Special Education Students/Students with Disabilities	
<p>School Percentage: 22% CI Percentage: 16%</p> <p><i>Hilltown Charter is above CI percentages</i></p>	<p>Met GNT/CI: no enhanced/additional strategies needed</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Continued 2023-24 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that flyers are available at the REACH project and the area early intervention program ● Outreach to Whole Children, a non-profit organization providing after school services for children with special needs ● Our SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council) is present and available

	<p>at our Open House for prospective parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SEPAC hosted monthly meetings and speakers with an open invitation to SEPACs from area districts
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Limited English Proficient Students

<p>School Percentage: 0% CI Percentage: 1.7%</p> <p><i>Hilltown Charter is below CI percentages</i></p>	<p>Continued 2023-2024 Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute flyers at Franklin-Hampshire Community Action Program ● All ads will include a statement welcoming LEP applicants ● Our website will include a statement welcoming LEP applicants ● “Google Translate” link will be available on our website ● Reach out to the local refugee organizations (Welcome Home Refugee Resettlement Program), including the distribution of flyers <p>Enhanced/additional strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute flyers and/or place advertisements in bulletins at religious organizations and groups that provide services in languages other than English ● Climate and Belonging Initiatives: Promotion of affinity and identity-based student groups, providing spaces where multilingual learners can feel affirmed and connected.
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Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch (Low-income)

<p>School Percentage: 18.8% CI Percentage: 30.2%</p> <p><i>Hilltown Charter is below CI percentages</i></p>	<p>Continued 2023-24 Strategies</p> <p>Outreach at local WIC and SNAP sites, Goodwill and Salvation Army stores</p> <p>Make flyers and applications available at Easthampton Community Food Pantry, Northampton Survival Center, Edwards Church Food Pantry, and Headstart programs</p> <p>Work with Administrators at the two major pre-school programs in our immediate area</p>
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(Community Action in Northampton and Head Start in Easthampton) to share information about Hilltown and how families can apply.

Specifically state in our promotional materials that our program serves all students, including students of all socio-economic backgrounds

Distribute promotional materials at local bus stops, libraries, laundromats

Outreach to more local preschools with promotional materials, invitations to information session and open house, and offer on-site informational sessions at their schools

Enhanced/additional strategies:

- **Implementation of a new school schedule** that mitigates a barrier to low income/working families. We are shifting from a 12:30 early release every Wednesday to a 2:00 dismissal.
- **Increase extracurricular subsidy** for low-income families on early release days. After-school programming will now be fully subsidized on early release days for families that qualify for free/reduced lunch.
- **Explore regional transportation options.** We recognize that (lack of) bussing can be a major barrier to recruitment for families outside of Easthampton. We will explore regional options to expand transportation options to families in our catchment area.

Retention Plan 2025-26

2024-25 Implementation Summary:

Hilltown prioritized student retention during the 2024–25 school year by strengthening systems of academic, social-emotional, and family support. Our efforts focused on ensuring that students and families felt connected to the school community, particularly those from historically underserved groups. We continued to develop our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), piloted inclusive instructional models, and expanded access to counseling and advisory support. School climate and family engagement remained central priorities, with ongoing reflection on feedback from staff, students, and caregivers.

Overall Student Retention Goal

Annual goal for student retention (percentage):	95%
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Retention Plan – 2024-25 Strategies

Students with Disabilities

School percentage: 16.1%
1 Standard Deviation:
20.09%

The school's attrition rate is below 1 standard deviation

Continued 2024-25 Strategies

- Small class size with low adult to child ratio
- Daily non-academic after-school program
- Frequent parent conferences

2025-26 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed: n/a

English Learners

School percentage: 0%
Third Quartile: 27.81%

The school's attrition rate is below 1 standard deviation

Continued 2024-25 Strategies

- No ELs were enrolled during the 2024-25 school year. No retention strategies needed.

2025-26 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed: n/a

Low-income	
School percentage: 0% 1 Standard Deviation: 20.56% The school's attrition rate is <u>below</u> 1 standard deviation	Continued 2024-25 Strategies Below third quartile: no enhanced/additional strategies needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that we have no income-based barriers to services ● Ensure that application for free/reduced lunch is easily and confidentially accessible ● Provide financial assistance for non academic after school programs ● Continued partnership with River Valley Counseling to ensure access to counseling for all students
	(c) 2024-25 Additional Strategy(ies), if needed: n/a

Appendix C: School Data Tables

Administrative Roster and Staff Attrition Data

Administrative Roster During the 2024-25 School Year			
Name	Title	Start date in current role	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Chris Kusek	Head of School	August 2025	
Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Director of Teaching and Learning	August 2025	

Teacher and Staff Attrition for the 2024-25 School Year				
	Number employed as of the last day of the 2024-25 school year	Number of departures during the 2024-25 school year	Number of departures following the end of the 2024-25 school year through July 31st	Reason(s) for Departure (Ex: resigned, terminated, retired, contract not renewed, etc.)
Teachers	21	1	5	Retired (3); Resigned (3)
Other Staff	25	2	6	Resigned (7); Contract not renewed (1)

Information About The Board of Trustees

Board Membership During the 2024-25 School Year					
Name	Position on the board	Committee affiliation(s)	Number of terms served on the board	Length of each term	Final year of service possible based on term limits in bylaws
Lily Newman	President	Domain Council	Year 2 (of 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2029
Kathleen Hulton	President (stepped down May 2025)	Domain Council	Year 1 (of second 3 year term)	07/24-07/27	June 2027
Ben Carlis	Vice President	Domain Council	Year 2 (of 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2029
Emily Boddy	Clerk	GABS Committee Chair	Year 1 (of second 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2027
Kylan Mandile	Treasurer	Finance Committee Chair	Year 2 (of first 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2029
Kelly Vogel	Trustee	Facilities Committee Chair	Year 2 (of first 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2029
Tala Elia	Trustee	Personnel Committee	Year 2 (of second 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2026
Kathleen Szegda	Trustee	JEDI Committee Chair	Year 2 (of second 3 year term)	07/23-07/26	June 2026
Kate Aleo	Trustee	Facilities Committee	Year 1 (of first 3 year term)	07/24-07/27	June 2027
Neal Teague	Trustee	Personnel Committee	Year 1 (of first 3 year term)	07/24-07/27	June 2027
Steve Sell	Trustee	JEDI Committee	Year 1 (of first 3 year term)	07/24-07/27	June 2027
Grace Mrowicki	Trustee (non-voting)	JEDI Committee Personnel Committee	Year 2 (of first 2 year term)	07/23-7/25	June 2027
Andrea Hermans	Trustee (non-voting)	JEDI Committee	Year 1 (of first two year term)	07/24-07/26	June 2028

Hilltown Board of Trustees and Committee Meeting notes can be found here:

[Board of Trustee and Committee Meeting Notices](#)

Appendix D: Conditions, Complaints, and Attachments

Complaints

[Board of Trustees Contact Information](#)

Summary Table

Date	Summary of Complaint	Summary of Complaint Resolution
5/16/25	A parent brought a complaint to administration about the handling of an incident involving her child's classmate. This resulted in an interaction with an administrator that the parent claimed was unprofessional, and was the basis of the formal complaint made to the board.	After a thorough investigation, the grievance claims were not supported by the evidence, which included a video recording of a Zoom call, interviews with staff members present during the interaction, and review of emails between the parent and the administrator. The review found that the school acted appropriately in all instances referenced, and the grievance was denied.



Finance Committee Minutes

Group: Finance Committee	Date and time: Wed., Mar 25, 2026 9:00 am
Location/Link: https://meet.google.com/ytq-mjoj-rpt	
<p>Agenda:</p> <p>Attendees: Chris Kusek, Lisa Plaza, Andrew Tilbe, Grace Mrowicki, Kylan Mandile <u>Regrets:</u> Carla Clark</p> <p>Minutes: Grace motions to approve March 4 minutes, Lisa seconds, minutes approved by consensus. ACTION: Kylan will send approved to the BoT</p> <p>Capex: Long-Range Capital Plan to be addressed over the summer. Elevator contract is up for renewal. ACTION: Chris to seek bids for elevator service per the fiscal policy and present to the BoT. ACTION: Kylan to send Chris contact info for vendor</p> <p>Audit: Carla obtained draft engagement letter which was discussed by the finance committee. Kylan motions to engage Daniel Dennis & Co to conduct the audit, Andy seconds, motion approved by consensus.</p> <p>FY2027 Budget Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The budget assumes full enrollment of 218 students. State Per Pupil Tuition will be revised again in the summer. DESE expects drop of 15% in Title I funds. ● Personnel expenses include adjusted salary scales, hire of support director and expanded special education services will result in lower paraprofessional expenses. ● Extra curricular coordination. Aggregate number of FTEs is not changing materially. Administrative Data Management System/Services were elevated last year for the changeover and training to Infinite Campus, so those are expected to go back from \$18,000 to \$8,000. ● Kids Club - Why is there \$80k in income but only \$37k in staff expenses. Answer: Some of the staffing expenses for Kids Club are within other staff cost line items so Kids Club is income neutral. ● SPED costs decrease because we have in-house staff, thus reducing spend on contractors ● Education supplies expected to decrease because some of the costs were one-time expenses for the grade re-alignment ● Operating surplus of \$19k and a deficit of \$46k after loan principal repayment ● Professional Development decreased because the grant funding decreased. <p>New Business: Review revised FY2027 budget. Review 3Q2026 financials.</p> <p>Review Action Items: Done</p>	

Next Meeting: May 6, 2026 at 9:00am

Adjourned: 9:25am