



HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

September 10, 2025 6:30pm

HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Or Join Zoom Meeting

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

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

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

Prework: Critical close reading prior to our meeting this month!

- Accountability Plan, Annual Report, HOS Performance Evaluation

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Topic	Who	Action	Est. Time
Welcoming (read mission statement): (5 min) <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 August BoT mtg 	Lily Newman	Decision	6:30 pm
Public Comment (5 min)	Lily Newman		6:35
Welcoming BOT New Members (5 mins)	Emily Boddy	Discussion	6:40
School Leader Updates (15 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing Curriculum/Initiatives Capital Improvements Infinite Campus 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion	6:45
Head of School Evaluation & Next Steps (20 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review, discuss and approve the Head of School Performance Evaluation for SY24-25 - Discuss and provide feedback on draft HOS 25-26 goals 	Lily Newman, Chris Kusek	Discussion and Vote Discussion	7:00



Accountability Plan & Annual Report (15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose and use - Role and responsibility of the BOT 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion	7:20
BOT and Committee Goals (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review 2 year BOT goals from SY24-25 - Discuss role of committees and their goals - Syncing meetings, objectives, reporting - Next Steps: Committee goals, deliverables and reporting timelines for October mtg 	Lily Newman	Discussion	7:35
Finance Committee Updates (10 mins)	Kylan Mandile	Discussion	7:45
Education/Accountability Committee (15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recap of the purpose and process thus far - Findings and recommendations from GABS - Next steps 	Kathleen Hulton and GABS	Discussion	7:55
Wrap Up (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action items review - Next steps/October meeting agenda items - Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb - Snacks and drinks for October 	Lily Newman	Decision	8:10
Executive Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To approve August Executive Session minutes <i>Executive session pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, s. 21(a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.</i>	Lily Newman	Decision	8:15
Adjournment	Lily Newman		8:20

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes/Retreat Summary DRAFT– Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 5-8:30pm

Location: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027;
Also by zoom

Present: Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Neal Teague, Steve Sell, Ben Carlis, Tala Elia, Andrea Hermans, Kylan Mandile, Kate Aleo, Emily Boddy, Grace Mrowicki

By Zoom: Lily Newman

Regrets:

Guests: Julia Bowen, retreat facilitator; Lauren Ames

By Zoom:

Facilitator: Tala Elia

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: Tala

Timekeeper: Kathleen S.

Mission statement read by: Kathleen Szegda

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper ● BOT Visibility this month 	<p>Announcements, Appreciations, Acknowledgements:</p> <p>Board Visibility:</p> <p>Summer Celebration 6/12; Goodbye Ceremony, 6/17; Graduation 6/13</p>	
<p>Public Comment (Ben)</p>	<p>None.</p>	

<p>Board Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approve July meeting dates (Virtual Only) ● Approve member term (GABS) ● Domain Council change FYI 	<p>No changes to minutes.</p> <p>GABS proposes Grace be renewed for a second two year term.</p> <p>Chris raises that we need an approval for extra funds for capital improvement, increased parking spot.</p> <p>Easiest to have this when we have the Exec session - open with open portion and then move into exec session.</p> <p>Considering the dissolution of Domain council, whilst keeping transparency for staff and public in mind. More information forthcoming at another board meeting.</p>	<p>Kate motioned to approve 5/14 meeting minutes; Ben seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p> <p>Tala motioned to approve a renewed two-year term for Grace; Kate seconded; the Board approved by consensus. Grace's term will start retroactively in July and will be proposed at the next annual meeting.</p>
<p>Board Retreat - led by Julia Bowen</p>	<p>Summary of Retreat:</p> <p>Board Roles & Responsibilities Purpose: Ensure that everyone on the board shares the same understanding of their roles and responsibilities as a governing board.</p> <p>Board Self-Assessment Data - Overview of the self-assessment data - Discussion and implications Purpose: Highlight the need to create the academic success committee; identify areas to build board capacity, even if not the focus of the retreat</p> <p>Accountability Plan - Accountability Plan purpose, process, use - Review and discuss proposed Accountability Plan Purpose: Create needed work/discussion time to focus on the Accountability Plan, putting into practice any key learnings about the board/management line.</p> <p>Academic Success Committee - Review and discuss description - Propose key areas for committee focus - Develop draft plan and reporting schedule for oversight. Purpose: Develop a shared understanding of the</p>	

	role of the Academic Success Committee as well as how the Committee will function.	
Meeting Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes Finalization ● Snacks + Drinks for next meeting ● Newsletter Blurb ● New business for next Board meeting 	Next Meeting: Special Meeting: June 19 at 8:30pm <i>July Meeting TBD</i> Facilitator: Tala Elia Snacks: Drinks: Newsletter blurb: New Business:	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm	Tala motioned to adjourn; Kate seconded; the meeting was adjourned.



Head of School Performance Evaluation

Name: Chris Kusek

Evaluation Period: August 1, 2024-July 31, 2025

Evaluator(s): Lily Newman, President, Board of Trustees

Date: September 10, 2025

Background & Context

Hilltown has undergone significant change in the past two years, including restructuring leadership into a single Head of School (HOS) role supervised by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The HOS now supervises all other leaders, including the Director of Teaching and Learning (DOTL), who was previously under the BOT. The unexpected transition of BOT President Kathleen Hulton and the appointment of Vice President Lily Newman as Interim President in the late spring also impacted this process.

Given these shifts, the Head of School Performance Evaluation is still evolving. This year's approach combined prior practices (direct report feedback, staff and family surveys) and newer ones that will carry into a more permanent approach and have been reviewed and approved by the Board for this cycle (e.g., using surveys as one part of a larger evidence base).

The Process

1. **Goal Setting:** The BOT President and HOS identified four goals aligned with the job description, Chris Kusek's strengths and learning areas, and strong leadership practice.
2. **Check-Ins:** The President and HOS met weekly, sharing updates and reflections through the year.
3. **Midyear Reflection:** [Link to the Midyear Progress Update](#)

The following sources were reviewed as part of the midyear progress update to the BOT:

- Head of School self-evaluation and self-reflection on progress toward goals
 - BOT President reflections on weekly 1-hour HOS/Board President Check-In Meetings
 - BOT President observations of forward-facing HOS communications, actions, and processes
 - BOT President observations of HOS with key stakeholder groups (Board, students, staff)
 - Survey of Board members
4. **Evidence Gathering & Review:** In late spring, the HOS, President, and Interim President gathered and reviewed evidence of progress, including
 - Faculty Survey - adapted from prior version for HOS and DOTL roles
 - Family Survey - adapted for HOS and DOTL
 - 360 Feedback - interviews with 2 Direct Reports in different roles
 - BOT Feedback - the BOT approved Neal Teague and Ben Carlis for this role
 - HOS Goals and Evidence Reflection
 5. **Summative Discussion:** The HOS and President discussed highlights, challenges, and hopes for the future, shaping next steps.
 6. **Performance Evaluation Report:** Drafted by the Interim President for BOT review and Sept. vote.



7. **Draft Goals for SY25–26:** Developed by the HOS, informed by the evaluation process and the Action Steps to Consider generated by Chris and the Interim President, included in this report.

Performance Evaluation Summary

This has been a year of many firsts for our HOS, Chris Kusek — and one, in his words, of “profound professional growth.” Stepping into a brand-new role required navigating complexity and uncertainty while leading with energy and conviction. Chris rose to the challenge, making remarkable strides in a short time and laying a foundation of trust, collaboration, and community to carry Hilltown forward.

Chris brought leadership and education experience from prior roles as Assistant Principal, Special Education Director, teacher and more. These skills were evident as he learned new systems, managed superintendent-level responsibilities unique to charter schools, and embraced Hilltown’s distinctive culture and context. His visibility, presence, and genuine care built trust quickly.

Staff, families, and students consistently highlighted his positivity and engagement. As one direct report shared: *“I have seen Chris build relationships with staff, families and students by spending time in classrooms, attending events and coffee hour at every opportunity.”* A caregiver echoed: *“Chris brings such a great energy and positive attitude to all interactions. The kids clearly like and respect him. He makes a clear effort to be engaged and supportive.”*

A growth-oriented leader, Chris has shown humility, adaptability and strong teamwork. His partnership with DOTL Rebecca Belcher-Timme was essential. Rebecca’s deep HCCPS knowledge and experience and dedication that matches Chris’s were instrumental in the year’s progress. Combined with his fresh perspective and leadership skills, this enabled significant progress. For example, together they implemented new systems and structures for Special Education that improved collaboration, compliance, and student experience. Parent satisfaction increased, disciplinary referrals for students with disabilities decreased, and DESE compliance improved.

Goals and Progress

Goal 1: Become known and trusted as the leader of the school by students, staff, and families.

This goal has been met and was a strength and success for Chris this year. Numerous stakeholders commented on his presence, dedication and care, which was felt by students, staff and caregivers. Chris prioritized visibility and accessibility, engaging with students, staff, and families daily. His presence at drop-off, events, and in classrooms was noted repeatedly. Almost all family survey respondents agreed he is accessible, communicates clearly, and builds community. Student climate surveys showed increased trust, and staff praised his seamless entry into the Hilltown community. *“He connects easily with all facets of the school community - parents, students, staff, outside agencies,”* one staff member commented. *“He is warm and present and genuinely invested in the school’s mission. I appreciate his experienced awareness of the big picture and how he took the helm in this new role to the school with a*



steady hand.” Chris himself reflected: “I aim to lead not only with presence and decisiveness, but also with curiosity, humility, and care.”

Next Steps: Chris can build on this momentum to deepen relationships with students, families, and staff who may need more time. Predictable feedback structures can ensure everyone feels heard. Survey data suggests that while most stakeholders have established trust and confidence, some continue to need time to build it. This can be accomplished with some of the strategies Chris identified for SY25-26:

- **Actions to Consider for SY25-26**

- Develop clear systems for classroom visits and direct report check-ins and procedures with the DoTL to ensure personalized feedback for all staff
- Host drop-in “office hours,” classroom walkthroughs, and follow-ups after initiatives
- Reach out intentionally to staff, caregivers and students who would most benefit from trust and relationship building and determine additional specific strategies to deepen this work
- Identify specific strategies to strengthen collaboration and support for teacher leaders, SERS staff
- Partner with Friends of Hilltown and SEPAC on family engagement
- Use shared tools such as staff memos and forms for early feedback and follow-through
- Use pulse surveys to assess and adjust leadership approach

Goal 2: Foster community through transparent communication

Chris’s communication was cited as a strength by many stakeholders and was observable in action. Weekly emails, listening sessions, and informal conversations provided clarity and connection. Families and staff repeatedly described him as approachable and responsive, noting *“His door is always open.”*

Survey results reflected strong trust, connection, and inclusivity. In the words of one staff member, *“I believe Chris actively fosters a culture of open communication among the staff, emphasizing individual and collective responsibility over hierarchical roles or connections.”*

Yet the pace and volume of change was challenging, despite most being anchored in the Long Range Plan (LRP). Some noted the need for more consistent check-ins, especially for those in leadership roles, as well as strategies to engage all community members in decisions. While Chris’s decisiveness and confidence are appreciated, some expressed that it can convey that decisions are predetermined or leave stakeholders feeling unheard. Chris himself acknowledged that messaging and vision were unclear to some stakeholders at times.

Several caregivers specifically flagged communication and other challenges around behavior supports, from expectations to follow-up. Consistent follow through on school rules and agreements was also rated lowest in the student climate survey. This has been a challenge since the pandemic and can hinder other goals if not addressed effectively. It will be an essential focus for SY25-26.

Next Steps: Balance strong leadership presence with clear structures for two-way communication, decision-making and staff support. Anchor decisions in a shared vision of success and the LRP, using



consistent language to show how input informs outcomes. Strengthen behavior supports, and determine areas of focus from the following actions:

- **Actions to Consider for SY25–26:**

- Anchor the work in a shared vision of the direction of the school and the changes ahead, as outlined in the Long Range Plan to ensure alignment, clarity and shared investment
- Identify specific strategies to build whole staff and individual relationships further
- Review and refine all elements of the behavior support system, coaching all relevant staff to ensure clear shared expectations, consistent implementation and rigorous follow-through; allocate expert consult in this area to address areas of limited experience on the team
- Identify the specific strategies to continue the culture building work among students (e.g., TMI project, student leadership opportunities)
- Develop clear goals, support plans, consistent check-ins and work oversight for all direct reports
- Identify and implement specific improvements to weekly bulletins; create a decision-making calendar
- Expand listening sessions; introduce monthly “Community Connection” meetings for families

Goal 3: Ensure equitable access for students with disabilities

Chris immediately identified gaps in Special Education and acted swiftly to ensure greater inclusion, collaboration between educators, and improved logistics, tracking and documentation. As noted in Chris’s reflection, *“We made important progress this year through a review of special education systems, expansion of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), and restructuring of staff roles to promote collaboration. New investments, including specialists and improved assessment tools, helped increase our capacity to meet student needs.”* Caregivers and staff noted meaningful improvements: *“He realigned time and resources to focus on special education students.”*

Next Steps: Chris identified action steps that build on this years’ foundations. He affirmed his commitment to a continued focus on Special Education in his EOY reflection. The team will now focus on implementation of the MTSS, with progress monitoring for continuous growth. To this end, the school is launching co-teaching with training and supports, among the other strategic actions below:

- **Actions to Consider for SY25-26**

- Finalize and implement the Special Education Action Plan, including strategies to strengthen inclusive practices, expand student support services, ensure compliance with DESE requirements, provide professional development for staff, and enhance family engagement.
- Provide staff training in UDL, co-teaching, and differentiation
- Strengthen Tier 1 and 2 supports, with clear priorities and strategies, roles and responsibilities and deeper collaboration between educators
- Increase engagement with families of students with disabilities through SEPAC forums and better progress monitoring communication
- Continue study and dialogue about LRE and inclusive models in small charter schools



Goal 4: Lead with Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) principles

Despite a challenging year nationwide for JEDI, Chris never faltered in his conviction and he and the team advanced Hilltown's JEDI goals. JEDI values informed hiring, curriculum review, student culture, professional learning and leadership work. Student belonging rose nearly 20 percentage points in the student climate survey, and over 90% of caregivers said their child feels safe and included at Hilltown. As Chris noted: *"JEDI values are not a separate priority but how we bring our mission to life."*

Next Steps: This year marked progress toward JEDI goals, but as Chris identified in his reflections, equity work is never done and "JEDI values should be visible in everything we do."

- **Actions to Consider for 2025–26:**

- Develop and pilot a JEDI decision-making tool at both the administrative and Board level
- Continue curriculum equity audits on representation, anti-bias pedagogy, identity development
- Expand student voice through structured feedback and leadership opportunities, including collaborating with the BOT to include student voice and leadership in governance
- Commit to deepening our collective understanding and practice of Restorative Principles through high quality PD for our administrative team and full faculty
- Intentionally integrate JEDI into the behavior support system, improving students' sense of equity and fairness at the school

Overall Summary and Next Steps

Chris's first year was a resounding success. He achieved substantial goals, demonstrated reflective leadership, and made a tremendous positive impact on the Hilltown community. His balance of conviction and humility, presence and openness, has laid a strong foundation.

Next steps: work with the BOT to finalize SY25–26 goals from the Next Steps to Consider in this report, identifying specific strategies to implement, clear metrics for monitoring, and the collaboration and support needed to sustain success.

In the words of one caregiver, "Chris jumped right in and has been such a warm, engaged and strong presence. I was impressed with him from the very beginning...and he has lived up to and exceeded my expectations...our school feels stronger with Chris at the helm."

As a BOT, we echo this appreciation and look forward to years ahead with deepened leadership and resounding success. We are eager to support Chris and specifically in his goal *"To lead from a place that is grounded in values, aligned with purpose, and open to learning; to keep refining the systems and structures that make our vision real, while staying attuned to the people they are meant to serve...[and]...to continue cultivating a school culture where trust, belonging, and shared purpose are not just ideals, but lived experiences for everyone."*

HCCPS Head of School
Professional Practice Goals, 2025–2026

I. Goal 1: Lead with Presence, Trust, and Transparent Communication

- **Specific:** Strengthen daily visibility with students, staff, and families while ensuring clear, two-way communication and a thoughtful pace of change aligned to the Long Range Plan.
- **Measurable:**
 - Conduct at least 2–3 informal classroom walkthroughs weekly.
 - Hold monthly office hours/drop-ins for staff and students.
 - Provide structured check-ins with all direct reports at least monthly, and all new staff at least once per trimester.
 - 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.
 - Host at least two “Community Connection” family forums and embed listening sessions into faculty meetings routinely.
 - Pilot pulse surveys twice per year to assess communication, clarity, and change management.
- **Relevant:** Builds trust, deepens relationships, ensures equitable staff support, and grounds leadership in the LRP while pacing change effectively.
- **Time-Bound:** Progress reviewed at midyear and end-of-year through climate survey, staff/family feedback, and reflection on alignment with the LRP sequence.

II. Goal 2: Strengthen Inclusive Special Education and Student Services

- **Specific:** Strengthen inclusive practices by assuming more active leadership of the SERS department as interim Special Education Director, ensuring strong MTSS implementation, IEP compliance, and family partnership.
- **Measurable:**
 - Finalize and implement the Special Education Action Plan by January 2026.
 - Organize at least two PD sessions on UDL, inclusive practice, co-teaching, and/or differentiation, as well as follow-up coaching & feedback, by May 2026.
 - Track Tier 1 and Tier 2 MTSS interventions to establish baseline for 25-26 that can be used to correlate with Special Education referral over time.
 - Host at least two SEPAC forums with clear reporting on progress monitoring and inclusion.
- **Relevant:** Advances equity, compliance, and family engagement; aligns with DESE requirements.
- **Time-Bound:** Review midyear and end-of-year with data from MTSS documentation, PD feedback, and SEPAC input.

III. **Goal 3: Embed Restorative, SEL, and Tier 1 Behavior Supports**

- **Specific:** Launch year one of a multi-year Restorative Practice initiative, integrate SEL supports that prioritize “connection before content,” and strengthen the schoolwide behavior support system. Provide explicit Tier 1 strategies and more robust support for the student support team to ensure consistent and coordinated implementation.

- **Measurable:**
 - Provide restorative training to leadership by September 2025, and all staff by September 2026.
 - Pilot at least one proactive schoolwide restorative structure (e.g., circles, peer mediator) by Fall 2026.
 - Adopt and begin implementation of at least one SEL curriculum for the upper grades by December 2025.
 - Establish and communicate a clear set of Tier 1 behavior expectations and supports by January 2026, with staff training and monitoring systems in place.
 - Hold monthly supervision and planning meetings with the MTSS Team to review data, refine Tier 1 practices, and strengthen team capacity.

- **Relevant:** Improves student belonging, fairness, and behavior supports; responds to survey feedback and strengthens consistency of the behavior system while advancing SEL and restorative culture.

- **Time-Bound:** Pilots evaluated throughout 2025–26, with midyear and end-of-year review of SEL, restorative, and behavior data to inform adjustments for year two in 2026–27.

IV. **Goal 4: Lead with Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)**

- **Specific:** Ensure equity principles are embedded in policy, practice, and culture.

- **Measurable:**
 - Create and pilot a clear JEDI decision-making tool with the admin team and Board committees by January 2026.
 - Conduct one curriculum audit focused on equity and representation by July 2026.
 - Create at least one new structured opportunity for student leadership and voice (e.g., student council Bot liaison) by January 2026.

- **Relevant:** Advances HCCPS’s mission and aligns with BOT emphasis on JEDI visibility in all domains.

- **Time-Bound:** Progress assessed throughout 25-26 and in Spring 2026 surveys, with reporting in end-of-year reflection.

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 SY24-25

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	<p>LRP: Goal 1C Communication & Decision-Making</p> <p>GABS: A, C (Board Book Updates, Clear Roles, Committees, Etc.)</p> <p>All: B</p>	
<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 	Leadership Retention	<p>BOT President: A, B, C</p> <p>Domain Council: B, C, D</p> <p>Finance: C</p> <p>Facilities: B (playground); C</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Align resources and support to leader goals, including coaching, regular reflection and data review d. Track progress towards goals and leader experience to adapt effectively for success 		(long-term facilities solution)	
<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 	High Quality Schools; Student Achievement	<p>LRP Goal 2C Revise BOT structures aligned to JEDI</p> <p>JEDI: A, B, C Domain: ABC GABS: B Facilities: A, C</p>	<p>Integrating with other committees and initiatives; sustaining/systematizing this</p> <p>Present but not yet systematized</p>
<p>4. Catalyze school priorities through a dedicated investment in resource generation and sustainability.</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 and community representation 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 	Raise Resources	<p>GABS: A, B, D Finance: A ALL: C Domain: D Facilities: A, C</p>	

COMMITTEE GOALS

Committee	Goals	4/9/25 Progress	Challenges/Next Steps
<p>GABS 2024-25 Committee Goals, Emily (Update)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment and Succession Planning 2. Board book - finalize, determine where it 'lives', who maintains certain pieces, integrate 3. Establish board feedback process 4. Clarify board's role in Fundraising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working to bring in community member; additional members lined up for SY25-26 - Board book in progress - Solidifying BOT feedback form 	

		- BOT efforts in fundraising but not yet clear role/codified (since 2014)	
JEDI Committee Goals, Kathleen S. (Report)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create JEDI volunteer group to support school efforts 2. Engage families in JEDI 3. Support school leadership in JEDI work 		
Personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation of teacher prep time and related equity issues 2. Enhancing shared resources within the committee and effectively archiving 	<p>Moved through first goal and were able to address additional issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Salary and equity, transparency for different roles <p>Moving forward on clear and transparent documentation</p>	
Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review ways to sustainably address facilities issues 2. Produce a document with long-term capital/component replacement needs 3. Use the created document to inform future capital spending priorities 	Dissolved - reallocated	
Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure HCCPS has the funds necessary to address long term capital needs, including preventative maintenance and proactive strategies 2. Ongoing review and approval of balanced budget and audit of annual financials for Board review 3. Take specific steps to more effectively integrate JEDI into Finance Committee work 4. Recruit and onboard at least one new parent member 		How are finances supporting the facilities needs and school leadership focus and priorities?

Domain	1. Track and support key school and leadership priorities across all Domains, and facilitate communication with the Board. 2. Promote school leaders' success with resources and supports aligned to their goals and needs.		
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BOARD SELF-EVALUATION: MCPSA supported this survey - Results here:

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

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>

<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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. <p>Data collection plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lily Newman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2025

	<u>Jun 30, 25</u>	<u>Mar 31, 25</u>	<u>Jun 30, 24</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
Easthampton Savings			
ESB-General Reserve x0819	231,570	228,707	220,254
ESB Checking - XXXXX4269	466,140	386,188	450,913
ESB-Capital Reserve x1886	266,876	263,582	335,354
Total Easthampton Savings	<u>964,585</u>	<u>878,477</u>	<u>1,006,520</u>
Total Checking/Savings	964,585	878,477	1,006,520
Accounts Receivable			
Revenue Receivable	200	0	0
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>200</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Other Current Assets			
Prepaid Expenses	21,086	0	29,857
Security Deposit	7,279	4,531	7,579
Total Other Current Assets	<u>28,365</u>	<u>4,531</u>	<u>37,436</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>993,150</u>	<u>883,008</u>	<u>1,043,955</u>
Fixed Assets			
Property 1-3 Industrial Pkwy			
Building	3,317,751	3,317,751	3,317,751
Land	472,975	472,975	472,975
Total Property 1-3 Industrial Pkwy	<u>3,790,726</u>	<u>3,790,726</u>	<u>3,790,726</u>
Accum. Depreciation - Building	-688,535	-669,197	-611,186
Property Improvements	409,323	346,218	191,806
Accum. Dep - Property Imprvmnts	-179,622	-172,863	-152,585
Property and Equipment			
Classroom Equip./Furnishings	34,508	34,508	34,508
Accumulated Depreciation - F&E	-32,712	-32,213	-30,713
Total Property and Equipment	<u>1,796</u>	<u>2,296</u>	<u>3,795</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>3,333,688</u>	<u>3,297,179</u>	<u>3,222,556</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>4,326,838</u>	<u>4,180,187</u>	<u>4,266,511</u>

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2025

	<u>Jun 30, 25</u>	<u>Mar 31, 25</u>	<u>Jun 30, 24</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable			
Accounts Payable	84,535	37,471	35,603
Total Accounts Payable	84,535	37,471	35,603
Credit Cards			
American Express	3,391	15,330	0
Capital One	0	220	1,216
Total Credit Cards	3,391	15,550	1,216
Other Current Liabilities			
Unearned Revenue	0	0	38,894
Accrued Expenses	6,088	0	5,549
Accrued Payroll	247,829	0	234,683
Deferred Revenue - Grants	992	742	1,058
Payroll Liabilities			
Dental Plan Payable	-350	-478	-318
Employee Health	-2,442	-8,705	-1,958
Employee Life	262	226	226
MA Retirement	0	0	-32
Sect 125 - FSA	-4,038	-4,583	-4,263
Total Payroll Liabilities	-6,568	-13,540	-6,345
Total Other Current Liabilities	248,341	-12,799	273,839
Total Current Liabilities	336,267	40,222	310,658
Long Term Liabilities			
Note Payable - USDA	3,066,691	3,082,173	3,127,985
Total Long Term Liabilities	3,066,691	3,082,173	3,127,985
Total Liabilities	3,402,958	3,122,395	3,438,643

09/01/25

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2025

	<u>Jun 30, 25</u>	<u>Mar 31, 25</u>	<u>Jun 30, 24</u>
Equity			
General Reserve Account	0	225,910	0
Res'd for Capital Expenditures	0	260,359	0
Contingency Fund	0	50,000	0
Investments in Fixed Assets	266,997	94,571	94,571
Undesignated Fund Balance	560,872	197,029	698,310
Net Income	96,012	229,923	34,988
Total Equity	<u>923,880</u>	<u>1,057,792</u>	<u>827,869</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>4,326,838</u>	<u>4,180,187</u>	<u>4,266,511</u>

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
State Sources				
Per-Pupil Revenue	3,851,183	3,791,907	59,276	102%
Total State Sources	3,851,183	3,791,907	59,276	102%
Federal Grants-DESE Administer				
ESSER III 119	1,440	1,440		100%
Safe & Supportive Schools (335)	10,000	10,000		100%
SPED 262 Early Childhood	797	797		100%
SPED 240	45,795	45,795		100%
SPED 274	2,500		2,500	100%
Teacher Quality 140	3,584	3,514	70	102%
Title I 305	22,628	22,628		100%
Title IV	10,000	10,000		100%
Total Federal Grants-DESE Administer	96,744	94,174	2,570	103%
Friends of HCCS Grant				
FOH Class Grants	500			
FOH Rolling Arts Grants	1,426	500	926	285%
Total Friends of HCCS Grant	1,926	500	1,426	385%
Private Grants				
MA Cultural Council	5,000	5,000		100%
Total Private Grants	5,000	5,000		100%
Fundraising Income				
Field Trip Fund	4,776	4,776		100%
Winter Fair	8,382	8,382	-0	100%
Total Fundraising Income	13,158	13,158	-0	100%
Other sources				
Earnings on Investments	26,487	20,000	6,487	132%
School Lunch Receipts	21,529	15,000	6,529	144%
Special Trip Receipts				
Prisms Special Trip Receipts	9,107			
Purples Special Trip Receipts	3,267			
Special Trip Receipts - Other		12,000	-12,000	
Total Special Trip Receipts	12,374	12,000	374	103%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
SPED Medicaid reimbursement	6,566	6,000	566	109%
Total Other sources	66,956	53,000	13,956	126%
Kid's Club Income	99,599	92,000	7,599	108%
Student Activity Fees	26,121	23,000	3,121	114%
Miscellaneous Income	4,056	3,000	1,056	135%
Total Income	4,164,742	4,075,739	89,003	102%
Gross Profit	4,164,742	4,075,739	89,003	102%
Expense				
Personnel Costs				
Personnel				
Professional Educational Staff	1,562,269	1,612,097	-49,828	97%
Paraprofessional Educ. Staff	447,709	451,459	-3,750	99%
Administrative Staff	441,571	385,344	56,227	115%
Directors	224,882	224,901	-19	100%
Kids' Club Staff	69,133	69,247	-114	100%
Stipends - Student Activities	10,109	7,000	3,109	144%
Stipends - Program	21,980	40,000	-18,020	55%
Longevity Pay	16,997	16,998	-1	100%
Total Personnel	2,794,651	2,807,046	-12,395	100%
Payroll Taxes				
FICA	55,576	57,849	-2,273	96%
Medicare	39,082	40,702	-1,620	96%
PFML Tax	11,837	10,000	1,837	118%
SUTA	6,722	8,421	-1,699	80%
UHC	3,201	2,713	488	118%
Total Payroll Taxes	116,418	119,685	-3,267	97%
Fringe Benefits				
College Credit Reimbursement	1,000	3,000	-2,000	33%
HRA Benefit	57,120	65,000	-7,880	88%
Health Diversion	19,448	20,000	-552	97%
Health insurance	304,043	310,000	-5,957	98%
Worker's Compensation Insurance	14,359	15,727	-1,368	91%
Total Fringe Benefits	395,971	413,727	-17,756	96%
Total Personnel Costs	3,307,040	3,340,458	-33,418	99%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed				
Administrative Consultant		11,000	-11,000	
Admin Services/Data Managemnt	15,734	25,000	-9,266	63%
Annual Audit	16,500	16,500		100%
FSA/HRA Service	1,879	2,600	-721	72%
Payroll Service	4,288	4,223	65	102%
SPED Contractors	177,836	120,000	57,836	148%
SPED Summer Services	4,760	4,760		100%
Total Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed	220,997	184,083	36,914	120%
Consultant & Other Svcs				
Curriculum Consultants	585	600	-15	97%
Legal Fees	7,993	10,000	-2,007	80%
Staff Development	13,789	8,000	5,789	172%
Total Consultant & Other Svcs	22,367	18,600	3,767	120%
Occupancy				
Cleaning Services	42,977	55,702	-12,725	77%
Copier Rental	5,843	6,000	-157	97%
Electricity	23,543	26,000	-2,457	91%
Elevator Maintenance	3,723	5,000	-1,277	74%
Fire/Sprinkler Alarm services	1,762	3,000	-1,238	59%
Heat	9,446	10,000	-554	94%
HVAC Maintenance	7,295	10,000	-2,705	73%
Insurance-Liability/Propty/Auto	39,983	39,983		100%
Interest Expense - USDA Loan	85,251	85,251	-0	100%
Internet	2,640	4,500	-1,860	59%
Landscaping	3,996	8,000	-4,004	50%
Minor Repair/Maintenance	32,427	30,000	2,427	108%
Plowing/Snow Removal	8,620	8,500	120	101%
Telephone	956	1,200	-244	80%
Trash Removal/Recycling	6,651	6,684	-33	100%
Water/Sewer	6,709	3,500	3,209	192%
Total Occupancy	281,822	303,320	-21,498	93%
Supplies				
Educational Supplies/Textbooks				
*Atelier supplies	2,322	2,500	-178	93%
*Blues Ed Supps	575	600	-25	96%
*Indigos Ed Supplies	520	600	-80	87%
*Greens Ed Supps	661	630	31	105%
*Yellows Ed Supps	568	600	-32	95%
*Oranges Ed Supps	333	660	-327	50%
*Reds Ed Supps	342	660	-318	52%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
*Purples Ed Supps				
Purples - ELA/HUM	253	510	-257	50%
Purples - Science	533	510	23	104%
Total *Purples Ed Supps	786	1,020	-234	77%
*Prisms Ed Supps				
*Prisms ELA/HUM	443	443	1	100%
*Prisms Math	475	443	33	107%
*Prisms Science	86	443	-357	19%
*Prisms Social Studies	301	443	-142	68%
Total *Prisms Ed Supps	1,304	1,770	-466	74%
*Minicourses	135	400	-265	34%
*Music/movement supplies				
*Music Supplies - K-5	16	375	-359	4%
*Music Supplies - 6-8	87	285	-198	31%
Total *Music/movement supplies	103	660	-557	16%
*Physical Education Supplies	343	875	-532	39%
*SPED Ed Supps	3,761	3,000	761	125%
*Reading Specialist Supplies	295	300	-5	98%
*Other Ed Supplies/Textbooks**	14,617	25,725	-11,108	57%
Educational Supplies/Textbooks - Other				
Total Educational Supplies/Textbooks	26,665	40,000	-13,335	67%
Food and Supplies	129	1,000	-871	13%
Health & Safety Supplies	2,369	3,600	-1,231	66%
Household Supplies	5,702	5,750	-48	99%
Office Supplies	4,632	4,750	-118	98%
Playground Supplies	487	1,000	-513	49%
Postage	239	500	-261	48%
Printing and Reproduction	79	500	-421	16%
Testing & Evaluation Supplies	4,141	6,760	-2,619	61%
Total Supplies	44,444	63,860	-19,416	70%
Equipment				
Chromebook Replacement	7,269	7,269	0	100%
Furnishings/Rugs	811	1,500	-689	54%
Minor Equipment	12,637	12,500	137	101%
SPED Equipment	1,891	3,000	-1,109	63%
Tech Repair/Replacement	8,153	10,000	-1,847	82%
Total Equipment	30,761	34,269	-3,508	90%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget
 July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Grant-funded expenses				
Friends of HCCS Grant Expense				
FOH Class Grant Expense	500			
FOH Rolling Arts Grant Expense	1,426	500	926	285%
Total Friends of HCCS Grant Expense	1,926	500	1,426	385%
Total Grant-funded expenses	1,926	500	1,426	385%
Other expenses				
Advertising	1,968	3,000	-1,032	66%
BOT Discretionary Fund	283	500	-217	57%
Community Domain Expense	3,533	3,844	-311	92%
Community Service Projects	45	500	-455	9%
Graduation Expenses	993	1,500	-507	66%
Field trips				
Indigos Field Trips	420	681	-261	62%
Blues Field Trips	420	681	-261	62%
Greens Field Trips	866	814	52	106%
Yellows Field Trips	866	814	52	106%
Oranges Field Trips	303	755	-453	40%
Reds Field Trips	303	755	-453	40%
Field trips - Other				
Total Field trips	3,177	4,500	-1,323	71%
Fundraising Expenses	1,279	1,400	-121	91%
Kid's Club Food/Supplies	251	1,500	-1,249	17%
MCSA Dues	10,905	10,905		100%
Miscellaneous Expenses	5,798	7,000	-1,202	83%
School Lunch Expense	30,102	20,000	10,102	151%
SPED Contingency				
Special Trip Expenses				
Prisms Special Trip Expense	7,559		7,559	100%
Purples Special Trip Expenses	3,550		3,550	100%
Special Trip Expenses - Other		12,000	-12,000	
Total Special Trip Expenses	11,109	12,000	-891	93%
Sunshine/Staff Appreciations	1,115	1,500	-385	74%
Student Activity Expenses	7,930	10,000	-2,070	79%
Total Other expenses	78,488	78,149	339	100%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School Report - Revenues & Expenditures vs. Budget July 2024 through June 2025

	Jul '24 - Jun 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Directors' Discretionary Fund		2,500	-2,500	
Total Expense	3,987,846	4,025,739	-37,893	99%
Net Ordinary Income	176,896	50,000	126,896	354%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Other Income - Non Operating				
Capital Project Donations	25,500			
Total Other Income - Non Operating	25,500			
Total Other Income	25,500			
Other Expense				
Depreciation Expenses	106,385	106,385	-0	100%
Board Designated Expenditures				
BOT Appvd Improvement Projects		50,000	-50,000	
Total Board Designated Expenditures		50,000	-50,000	
Total Other Expense	106,385	156,385	-50,000	68%
Net Other Income	-80,885	-156,385	75,500	52%
Net Income	96,012	-106,385	202,397	-90%

Hilltown Charter

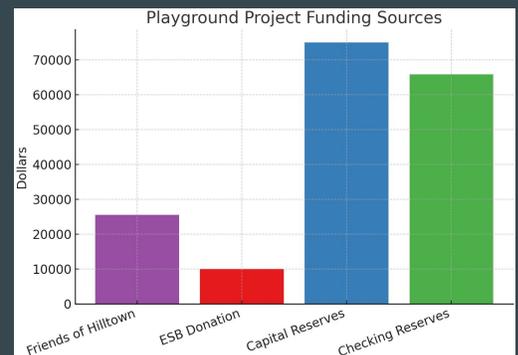
FY25 Year-End Financial Summary



- Impact of playground project
- Review of FY25 balance sheet and Q4 performance
- Strategic risks and outlook for FY26

Capital Project – Playground

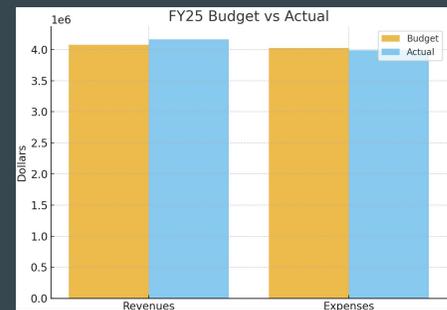
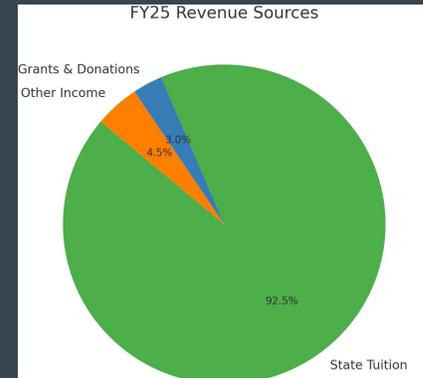
- Total Cost: **\$176K** (just \$3K over estimate)
- Funding Sources:
 - a. \$25.5K FOH donation
 - b. \$10K ESB donation (+\$10K pledged FY26)
 - c. \$75K Capital Reserves
 - d. \$65.9K Checking Reserves
- Initial playground reviews from students (and staff) are VERY positive !!!!



Revenues & Expenditures (FY25 vs Budget)

- Assets: **\$4.3M**
- Cash & Savings: **\$964K**
- Liabilities: **\$3.4M** (mainly USDA loan)
- Equity: **\$924K** (up nearly \$100K from FY24)
- Total Income: **\$4.16M** (+\$89K over budget)
- Expenses: **\$3.99M** (slightly under budget)
- Net Income: **\$96K** (vs budgeted loss of \$106K)

FY25 ended \$202K stronger than projected.; Stable, debt manageable, and equity growth reflects positive net income



Q4 Story – What Drove the Finish

- **Tuition Adjustment** : Higher-than-expected; boosted revenues and equity
 - Reliance on tuition (92% of income) creates vulnerability to potential Chapter 70 changes
- **Special Education Contracting** : Costs ~50% over budget
 - FY26: Hiring in-house staff to reduce risk and strengthen collaboration & student supports
- **Strategic Investments** : Support grade realignment, curriculum, student supports and renovations
 - Frontloaded FY25 purchasing when able (eg lockers; partial SIS payment)
 - Spending in Q1 FY26 to support curriculum and building investments (EL Education, paint)

Strategic Risks & Responses

- **Tuition Dependence (92% of income)**
 - Vulnerable to Chapter 70 state aid changes
 - Response: **Political engagement & advocacy;** conservative budgeting, reserve growth,
- **SpEd Contracting Costs**
 - \$177K spent vs \$120K budgeted
 - Response: In-house hiring FY26
- **Strategic Investments**
 - Balancing reserves with growth needs
 - Response: Targeted spending on realignment, curriculum, facilities

Closing Takeaways

- Stronger balance sheet than forecasted
- Playground completed successfully and responsibly
- Risks identified with clear strategies in place
- Hilltown enters FY26 on firm footing despite continued uncertainty in the federal and state fiscal environment

Board Packet Memo: Academic Committee Research Summary

*Prepared by Kathleen Hulton
September 2025*

As part of our ongoing discussion about forming an academic-focused committee of the Board, I conducted a review of 63 Massachusetts Commonwealth charter school boards to understand how common these committees are, what they're called, and what roles they typically serve.

Overview of Findings

This review encompasses 63 boards, representing all or nearly all Commonwealth charter school boards in the state.

(Note: While DESE and the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association list 69–70 active Commonwealth charter schools in the state, some small networks—such as KIPP—share one governance structure across multiple campuses, and were therefore counted as one board in this analysis.)

Of the 63 boards reviewed:

- **40 boards (63%) have a board committee dedicated to academic accountability and/or the school's educational program.**

Due to significant variation in the amount and quality of publicly available information, it's likely that some of the remaining 23 boards also maintain academic committees that are not documented online.

Committee Names and Frequency

While naming conventions vary, the following titles were found among the boards with academic-focused committees. This list is ordered from the most to least frequently occurring name, with the number of instances in parentheses:

- **Academic Excellence Committee** (12)
- **Education Committee** (7)
- **Academic Achievement Committee** (4)
- **Teaching and Learning Committee** (3)
- **Academic Oversight Committee** (3)
- **Student Success Committee** (2)
- **Accountability Committee** (2)
- **Academic Acceleration Committee** (1)

- **Academic Advisory Committee (1)**
 - **Academic Affairs Committee (1)**
 - **Academic Affairs and Accountability Committee (1)**
 - **Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (1)**
 - **Student Academic Performance and Achievement Committee (1)**
 - **Mission Committee (1)**
-

Upshots

- A clear majority (**63%**) of Commonwealth charter boards have a standing academic or education-focused committee.
 - These committees provide structure for **ongoing board-level engagement in academic affairs**, while respecting the leadership and management roles of school administration.
-

Next Steps

We've reserved time during this month's board meeting to continue discussing the potential scope, structure, and purpose of such a committee at HCCPS. Based on this and other conversations we've had as a Board, as well as resources shared by Julia Bowen, MPCSA, and further input from Chris and Rebecca, GABS will bring a formal proposal for consideration and vote at our October meeting. Our goal at this stage isn't to finalize every operational detail, but to establish the committee's core purpose and enable it to begin meeting. Much of the finer structure can and should develop through practice once the committee is up and running.



Notice of Public Meeting

Group: Finance Committee Meeting

Date and time: Monday, June 16, 2025 8:30 am

Minutes:

In attendance: Chris Kusek, Carla Clark, Andy Tilbe, Lisa Plaza, Alex Porter, Grace Mrowicki, Ben Carlis

Proposal for capital improvements to the parking lot and parking access

- Previously discussed additional communication to Industrial Drive at far end of parking lot
- Chris has worked through permitting
- Named reasons are to improve traffic flow during peak times for both school community members and neighbors.
- Quote from Duffy-Willard for \$7055 includes cutting curb, digging trench, 12" hard pack gravel, paving
- We will additionally need to add signage and painted arrows, which may increase cost somewhat, but not significantly
- The current mixed entrance/exit will become entrance only
- Consideration of including crosswalk painting in parking lot as part of this project
- Questions about impact on parking spaces - change in traffic pattern will only remove one parking spot currently available
- Andy moves to approve as presented, Lisa seconds, passes by consensus
- Adjourn



Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - June 2025

Group: Finance Committee Meeting	Date and time: Wed., June 4,, 2025 8:30 am
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Location/Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88364987634?pwd=cFFOR081T3ViZjh0eTNTUEdOSWZldz09

Online Meeting ID: 883 6498 7634	Online Meeting Password: budget
---	--

Attendees: Chris Kusek, Carla Clark, Grace Mrowicki, Alex Porter, Kylan Mandile, Lisa Plaza, Andy Tilbe

Regrets: None

- Minutes - Chris motions to approve the May 2025 minutes, Lisa seconds. Minutes approved by consensus
- Facilities Update - Chris provided an update
 - Fire Suppression System - The 5-year sprinkler inspection was conducted. Due to some observed debris buildup, the sprinkler company recommended a sprinkler system flush that is due to be conducted the day after school ends. The sprinkler system flush will may reveal problems in the system that can be repaired. ACTION: Chris will follow up with the committee once the results of the sprinkler flush are available.
 - Parking lot - Chris called the Easthampton Department of Public works. Chris wrote out proposal to Department of Public Works which seemed amenable to the addition of a vehicular ingress/egress point by the southwest corner of the property boundary. There are also parts of the asphalt that need to be patched and resurfaced. Alex Hughes created a sketch of the traffic patterns. Suggestion of creating a crosswalk where people should be walking. ACTION: Chris to gather quotes for curb cut.
 - PCA - Completion of the Property Condition Assessment will be delayed while the immediate repair items, such as the sprinklers and parking asphalt, are completed.
 - Cleaners and maintenance - Considering other cleaning company contracts. There is an ongoing issue with minor repairs that are not assigned. Carla noted that we have tried hiring a fix-it person in the past on retainer and we did not have enough hours to fill them. It has been challenging to find someone who can volunteer their time for it. Carla suggested a system in which the fix-it work will blasted to a pool of contractors. ACTION: Chris to ask Tiffany to add request for paid handy person to the Hilltown Happenings newsletter. Alex and Kylan will forward the newsletter blurb to potential candidates they know.
- Summer Work - Chris provided an update. Once the playground is finished, some volunteer work will be needed. Sprucing up the school. Lockers need to be installed.
- New Business - Q4 financial statements will be reviewed at the September Finance Committee meeting
- Review Action Items
 - Kylan to send approved May minutes to Kate for BoT packet
 - Chris will follow up with the committee once the results of the sprinkler flush are available.
 - Chris to gather quotes for curb cut.
 - Chris to ask Tiffany to add request for paid handy person to the Hilltown Happenings newsletter. Alex and Kylan will forward the newsletter blurb to potential candidates they know.
 - Carla to circulate Q4 financial statements when available
- Next Meeting - Scheduled for Wednesday, July 2,, 2025 at 8:30 am via Zoom
- Adjournment at 9:20am - Kylan proposes adjournment and Chris seconds.



GABS Committee Meeting Minutes – Fri, Aug 1, 2025, 1 pm

Meeting Location: Zoom

Present: Emily Boddy; Tiffany Ross; Kate Aleo; Sara Scheffelin

Guests:

Regrets:

Notetaker: Emily

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Check-in/ Announcements	Checked in.	
JEDI		
Approve June 2025 Minutes	Approved by Consensus	
Succession Planning - Discussion and Decision	<p>GABS discussed bringing two members on now, due to resignation of Kate Aleo. We would be down to 8 parents on the board, and we have work that requires more people. We still will have 3 spaces for community members, as we are able to recruit.</p> <p>Kathleen Hulton - can serve 2 years to complete her second term.</p> <p>Adam Szymkowicz - had intended for a 26-27 start, but keen to get started now. MS Civics Teacher at MV in Easthampton. Has a rising 2nd grader and a younger child who will start 2026.</p>	GABS agrees by consensus to bring proposal to August Board Meeting.



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
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Board Book Organizational Plan - Discussion	Kathleen will continue to support this project. She and Emily have been working on it this summer and making progress, will collaborate with Grace for tech side of things.	
New Business	Finalize/Ensure committees are set and have what they need. Orientation in September.	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	Meeting dates for the year, 8:30am: TBD	
Adjournment	1:20pm	

Agenda items for next month:

GABS agenda items for next BOT meeting: