



HILLTOWN
COOPERATIVE
CHARTER
PUBLIC
SCHOOL

HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

August 13, 2025 6:30pm

HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Also: Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 836 7929 3502

Passcode: 7dvsWu

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:

- ADD HERE - packet; Close read Gender Non-Discrimination policy

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Topic (estimated time)	Who	Action	Estimated 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 June BoT mtg 	Lily Newman	Decision	6:30 pm
Public Comment (5 min)	Lily Newman		6:40
School Leader Updates (15 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report, Student Opportunity Act, Accountability Plan, and Integrated Monitoring Plan CAP Hiring (Prisms Humanities, Music, Health, SEL) Capital improvement (playground, parking lot) SIS (board members as early adopters/ambassadors!) Summer curriculum work/grade realignment 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion	6:45

<p>f. Professional Development/Curricular Initiatives planned for SY25-26</p>			
<p>BOT Composition & Business: (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve new and returning members - Projected leadership structure for FY26 - Domain Council change vote and FYI on new approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. For leadership strategizing and alignment/coordination with the BOT: HOS advisory group with BOT leaders and others as needed to advise on key matters, including those pertaining to the BOT b. For transparency with staff and opportunity to hear about and discuss BOT agenda topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. HOS or DoTL will provide a BOT mtg agenda preview with Q&A time at strategically timed staff meetings each month ii. BOT leaders will host trimester or quarterly drop-in sessions at the school where teachers can come discuss concerns, issues, learn more about the BOT, etc. 	<p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>Decision Vote</p>	<p>7:00</p>
<p>Head of School Evaluation & Next Steps (10 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeking approval/a vote for an adjusted approach to the HOS evaluation rubric - Rationale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Folks got a good start to this last spring but didn't make a lot of progress before BOT leadership change - This tool can capture what Hilltown believes are the most important leadership elements and should therefore not be rushed - Many indicators for academics cut across our two leader roles and this needs to be considered - We still used it to discuss HOS progress and are using it to draft goals - Valuable to work on for January 	<p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>Discussion and Vote</p>	<p>7:15</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asking former advisory members to consider continuing - Ben, Neal, Grace, Steve - Official committee? Advisory Group? Would include some input from staff and students 			
<p>Academic/Accountability Committee (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recap of where we left off after June retreat - Next steps: to hone in on the specific purpose and monitoring content and approach - Proposal: Solicit a small working group to hone the title and parameters for an official proposal and vote in September 	Chris Kusek Lily Newman	Discussion and Decision	7:25
<p>Policy Updates and Decisions (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender Nondiscrimination policy proposal (consider and vote) - Other policy updates for Faculty and Staff Handbook (Restraint Policy, etc.) 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion and Vote	7:40
<p>Wrap Up (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action items review - Next steps/September meeting preview - Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb - Snacks and drinks for September - Action Items review 	Lily Newman	Decision	7:55
<p>Adjournment</p>	Lily Newman		8:00

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes/Retreat Summary – 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.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Special Meeting– Wednesday, June 19, 2025, 8:30pm

Location: Zoom meeting only

Present (By zoom): Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Neal Teague, Ben Carlis, Tala Elia, Kylan Mandile, Emily Boddy, Grace Mrowicki, Lily Newman, Kelly Vogel, Kate Aleo

Regrets: Kathleen Szegda, Steve Sell

Guests:

By Zoom:

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: N/A

Timekeeper: N/A

Mission statement read by: Lily Newman

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper		
Public Comment (Ben)	None.	
Proposal: Parking Lot changes, increase in budget	The new parking lot entrance and exit has been quoted to cost \$7,055. Kylan suggests an allowance of \$8,500 to ensure any changes or additions can be covered, for example, it costs more when the work starts happening or if we have to contract with a different provider due to time constraints or feasibility.	Kylan motioned to approve the proposal with amendment that the cost allowance is increased to \$8,500. Ben seconded; the Board approved the proposal, with amendments, by consensus.

<p>Meeting Wrap-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes Finalization 	<p>Next Meeting: TBD</p> <p>Facilitator: Lily Newman</p> <p>Snacks:</p> <p>Drinks:</p> <p>Newsletter blurb:</p> <p>New Business:</p>	
<p>Review Action Items</p>	<p>Reviewed action items.</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm</p>	<p>Lily motioned to move into executive session and adjourn the open meeting from executive session; Tala seconded; the meeting was adjourned.</p>

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Special Meeting DRAFT– Wednesday, June 19, 2025, 8:30pm

Location: Zoom meeting only

Present (By zoom): Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Neal Teague, Ben Carlis, Tala Elia, Kylan Mandile, Emily Boddy, Grace Mrowicki, Lily Newman, Kelly Vogel, Kate Aleo

Regrets: Kathleen Szegda, Steve Sell

Guests:

By Zoom:

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: N/A

Timekeeper: N/A

Mission statement read by: Lily Newman

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper 		
<p>Public Comment (Ben)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>Proposal: Parking Lot changes, increase in budget</p>	<p>The new parking lot entrance and exit has been quoted to cost \$7,055. Kylan suggests an allowance of \$8,500 to ensure any changes or additions can be covered, for example, it costs more when the work starts happening or if we have to contract with a different provider due to time constraints or feasibility.</p>	<p>Kylan motioned to approve the proposal with amendment that the cost allowance is increased to \$8,500. Ben seconded; the Board approved the proposal, with amendments, by consensus.</p>

<p>Meeting Wrap-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes Finalization 	<p>Next Meeting: TBD</p> <p>Facilitator: Lily Newman</p> <p>Snacks:</p> <p>Drinks:</p> <p>Newsletter blurb:</p> <p>New Business:</p>	
<p>Review Action Items</p>	<p>Reviewed action items.</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm</p>	<p>Lily motioned to move into executive session and adjourn the open meeting from executive session; Tala seconded; the meeting was adjourned.</p>

DRAFT

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
Public School Monitoring

MONITORING REVIEW

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public

Monitoring Onsite Year: 2024-2025

All corrective action must be fully implemented and all noncompliance corrected as soon as possible and no later than one year from the issuance of the Special Education and Civil Rights Monitoring Report dated 03/18/2025.

Mandatory One-Year Compliance Date: 06/28/2026

Summary of Required Corrective Action Plans in this Report

Criterion	Criterion Title	Rating
CR 10A	Student handbooks and codes of conduct	Partially Implemented
CR 17A	Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly-funded education program	Partially Implemented

Directions:

- Use these worksheets to draft ideas for CAP. **Identify the root cause of the noncompliance.**
- The worksheets mirror the CAP pages in WBMS; when you are ready, put the information into the CAP summary (*PSM Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR)*>*CAP/Progress Reports*>*CAP Summary*)
- When fields with an asterisk have been filled, click “complete” on that page
- When the CAP is done, submit CAP (*PSM Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR)*>*CAP/Progress Reports*>*Submit CAP*)
- Upload a letter of assurance signed by the Head of School to additional documents (*PSM Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR)*>*Self-assessment*>*Additional Documents*)

CAP due: July 28, 2025

Criterion & Topic: EXAMPLE		Rating: partially implemented
Department Findings: This is where you can see the language of the finding and what explicitly needs correcting		
Title/Role(s) of Responsible Persons: <i>This should be the role, not the person; can be more than one person (i.e: director of student services, superintendent)</i>	Expected date of completion: <i>When do you expect to have this corrected?</i>	
Description of Corrective Action: <i>In this section, please include a detailed root cause analysis that describes why the initial instance(s) of noncompliance occurred.</i>		
Evidence of Completion of the Corrective Action: <i>In this section, please include a list of documents the district/school will provide as evidence demonstrating progress towards addressing noncompliance. If any additional documentation is required, PSM staff will describe the requirements in the progress reports</i> <i>List the evidence that the completed corrective action will include.</i>		
Procedural/policy findings almost always include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated procedures/policies ● Evidence of approval (if applicable) ● Evidence of training ● Evidence of dissemination 		
Description of Internal Monitoring Procedures: <i>In this section, please describe the updated internal monitoring process that will be implemented to ensure ongoing compliance. The description should include the role of the person(s) responsible for ongoing monitoring, cadence of monitoring, and any other relevant details. If any additional information is required, PSM staff will describe the requirements in the progress reports.</i> <i>For example:</i> <i>In the spring of each year, the district special education leadership team, inclusive of list titles, will review and track completion of, etc.</i>		

Criterion & Topic: CR 10A: Student handbooks and codes of conduct	
Rating: Partially implemented	
Department Findings: Document review and staff interviews indicated that the following procedures were recently updated to include all requirements and approved by the Board of Trustees: Due process regarding the discipline of students with disabilities; and Superintendent's hearing to appeal the principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension. However, these updates have not yet been added to the code of conduct and disseminated to the school community.	
Title/Role(s) of Responsible Persons: Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning	Expected date of completion: September 30, 2025
Description of Corrective Action: While Hilltown administration revised our Due Process policy and procedures during the pre-finding stage of the recently completed PSM Integrated Monitoring Review, we were not able to incorporate the revised policy into our Family Handbook and have it approved by the HCCPS Board of Trustees in time for the onsite visit. The root cause of this noncompliance was the timing of the policy update in relation to our annual handbook revision and approval process. Although the revised policy was completed in good faith and aligned with state requirements, it was finalized too late to be included in the handbook version presented to the Board prior to the review. Additionally, our handbook update process lacked a clear mechanism for rapid revision and mid-year dissemination, limiting our ability to reflect policy changes on a shorter timeline. To address this, Hilltown will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present a newly revised Family Handbook to the Board, including the updated Due Process policy, at the August 13th, 2025 meeting. ● Integrate the new policy into mandatory staff training to be delivered prior to the start of the school year in late August. ● Disseminate the updated Family Handbook electronically and post it to www.hilltowncharter.org prior to the start of the 2025–26 school year. 	
Evidence of Completion of the Corrective Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The revised Due Process policy will be incorporated into our Family Handbook, and we anticipate approval of the revised handbook by the Board of Trustees at our meeting on August 13th. ● All training related to due process will be updated to include the revisions. Evidence will include training materials and verification of attendance. 	
Description of Internal Monitoring Procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Family handbook is reviewed and revised each year to ensure compliance with any new updates to procedure and policy. 	

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Criterion & Topic: CR 17A: Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly-funded education program	Rating: partially implemented
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Department Findings:
 Document review and staff interviews indicated that the school's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures are inconsistent with regulations under 603 CMR 46.00 and do not include the following requirements:

- A statement indicating that prone restraint shall be prohibited except on an individual student basis and only under the circumstances of 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b)(1-6); and
- Training content requirements for all staff.

Additionally, the school's restraint prevention and behavior support training does not include the following requirements:

- The role of the student and family in preventing restraint;
- Information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used; and
- Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans applicable to an individual student.

Furthermore, the school's training materials contain erroneous information regarding reporting requirements.

Title/Role(s) of Responsible Persons: Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning	Expected date of completion: August 29, 2025
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Description of Corrective Action: Hilltown updated its physical restraint policy in preparation for the Integrated Monitoring Review; however, the accompanying procedures and training materials were not revised in full alignment with the requirements of 603 CMR 46.00. Specifically, our written procedures did not yet include language prohibiting prone restraint except under limited regulatory exceptions, and our annual staff training did not include several key content areas, including the role of students and families in prevention, trauma-informed considerations, and accurate reporting requirements.

The root cause of this noncompliance is closely tied to the school's transition during the 2024–2025 school year, which included significant leadership restructuring and the onboarding of two new administrators. While the administrative team worked diligently and in good faith to respond to the IMR process, the absence of a centralized system for policy management created obstacles in ensuring that policy updates, training content, and internal documentation remained aligned. In this context, gaps emerged between the revised policy and supporting procedures and training materials.

To address this, Hilltown will:

- Revise and clarify our physical restraint procedures to align fully with 603 CMR 46.00, including required language on prone restraint and other procedural expectations.
- Update our staff training materials to ensure all required content is included and that reporting guidance is accurate and aligned with current regulations.
- Deliver the revised training to all staff as part of our mandatory August 2025 professional development.

- Establish a coordinated annual review process led by the Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning to maintain alignment across policy, procedure, and training content.

Evidence of Completion of the Corrective Action:

- Revised restraint prevention and behavior support procedures, updated to reflect full compliance with 603 CMR 46.00, including:
 - A clear statement prohibiting prone restraint except as allowed under 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b)(1–6)
 - Accurate and current reporting protocols
- Updated staff training materials, including slides focusing on:
 - The role of students and families in preventing restraint
 - The increased risk of injury associated with any use of restraint
 - Administering restraint in consideration of medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and individual behavior intervention plans
 - Accurate reporting timelines and procedures

Training agenda and attendance documentation from August 2025 staff training (e.g. participation logs for asynchronous modules)

Links to updated policy and procedures posted on the Hilltown Charter website and shared with staff through email

Description of Internal Monitoring Procedures:

- Each spring, the Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning will review restraint policies, procedures, and training materials to ensure alignment with 603 CMR 46.00.
- Updated training will be delivered to all staff during August PD, with attendance tracked. New hires will receive the same training during onboarding.
- The Head of School will review all restraint incident reports to ensure timely reporting and alignment with policy, including documentation of trauma-informed practices and individual student needs.

Embed links to policies



Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

**INTEGRATED MONITORING REVIEW
REPORT**

Office of Public School Monitoring

For Group B Universal Standards

Date of Onsite Visit: May 9, 2025

Date of Report: June 27, 2025

Corrective Action Plan Due: July 28, 2025

**Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Onsite Team Members:
Sarah Kelleher-Mochak, Chairperson
Heather Cuthbertson**



Patrick Tutwiler
Interim Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
INTEGRATED MONITORING REVIEW REPORT**

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

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**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
OFFICE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL MONITORING
INTEGRATED MONITORING REVIEW REPORT INTRODUCTION**

During the 2024-2025 school year, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School participated in an Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR) conducted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE or Department) Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM). The purpose of the Integrated Monitoring Review is to monitor compliance with regulatory requirements focusing on special education and civil rights.

Components of the Integrated Monitoring Review



Integrated Monitoring is one of eight components of a state's general supervision system. One aspect of Integrated Monitoring is the Integrated Monitoring Review. Each school district, charter school, vocational school, and virtual school undergoes an Integrated Monitoring Review every three years. The Department's Office of Public School Monitoring (PSM) is responsible for conducting these reviews and works closely with offices throughout the Department including, but not limited to, the Office of Special Education Planning and Policy (SEPP), Problem Resolution System Office (PRS), and the Office of Approved Special Education Schools (OASES) to promote cohesion and collaboration across the Department's general supervision system. As set forth in the diagram above, Integrated Monitoring Review is one of the multilayered, cohesive, and formal processes employed by the Department to examine and evaluate all LEAs' implementation of IDEA with a particular emphasis on educational results, functional outcomes, and compliance.

The monitoring cycle is posted at [Integrated Monitoring Review Three Year Cycle](#).

Regularly monitored standards are divided into two groups, known as Group A Universal Standards and Group B Universal Standards. Districts and schools are monitored on an alternate set of Universal Standards every three years.

Group A Universal Standards address:

- Student identification
- IEP development
- Programming and support services
- Equal opportunity

Group B Universal Standards address:

- Licensure and professional development
- Parent/student/community engagement
- Facilities and classroom observations
- Oversight
- Time and learning
- Equal access

The Department has also reserved a specific set of criteria, collectively known as Focused Standards, which are reviewed if the Department deems appropriate due to concerns with those particular standards. In those circumstances, the identified Focused Standards are assessed in addition to the Universal Standards.

Universal Standards and Focused Standards are aligned with the following regulations:

Special Education (SE)

- Selected requirements from the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq* and accompanying regulations at 34 CFR Part 300.
- Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71B, and the Massachusetts Special Education regulations (603 CMR 28.00).

Civil Rights Methods of Administration and Other General Education Requirements (CR)

- Specific federal civil rights requirements, including requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, together with select state requirements under M.G.L. c. 76, § 5 and M.G.L. c. 269 §§ 17 through 19.
- Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Physical Restraint regulations (603 CMR 46.00).
- Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Student Learning Time regulations (603 CMR 27.00).
- Specific requirements from the Massachusetts Student Records regulations (603 CMR 23.00).
- Various requirements under other federal and state laws and regulations.

Integrated Monitoring Review Process:

Discovery: During the Discovery stage, the PSM chairperson analyzes data and information to prepare for the onsite visit. The chairperson also reviews documents submitted by the district/school.

Engagement: The Engagement stage of the Integrated Monitoring Review includes all activities conducted onsite and/or virtually through the issuance of the Integrated Monitoring Review Report. Such activities may include record review, interviews, and observations.

Close-out: Once the Report is issued, the Close-out stage begins for the schools and districts with any identified findings of noncompliance. The Close-out stage includes the development of the Correction Action Plan and completion of subsequent progress reports to ensure all instances of noncompliance are resolved within one year of the issuance of the Integrated Monitoring Review Report.

PSM Team:

Depending upon the size of a school district and the number of special education programs to be reviewed, a team of one to four Department staff members conducts onsite activities over one to five days in a school district or charter school.

Report for Integrated Monitoring Reviews:

The Integrated Monitoring Review Report will be issued within approximately 30 days of the conclusion of the onsite visit.

Pre-finding Corrections:

During the Discovery and Engagement stages of the review, PSM staff may find that the district/school violated an IDEA requirement prior to the issuance of a finding in the Integrated Monitoring Review Report. In such cases, PSM staff may implement the pre-finding correction protocol. If PSM staff verify that the identified noncompliance is resolved prior to the issuance of the report, no finding is made. However, a list of any pre-finding corrections will be included in the Integrated Monitoring Review Report. More information regarding the pre-finding correction protocol can be found in the PSM procedures at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/procedures.docx>.

Ratings: In the Integrated Monitoring Review Report, the onsite team gives a rating for each compliance criterion it has reviewed; those ratings are “Commendable,” “Implemented,” “Implementation in Progress,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” “Not Applicable,” and “Prior Noncompliance - Corrective Action Under Review.”

The onsite team includes a comment in the Integrated Monitoring Review Report for each criterion that it rates “Commendable,” “Partially Implemented,” “Not Implemented,” or “Prior Noncompliance - Corrective Action Under Review,” explaining the basis for the rating.

Corrective Action: Where criteria are found “Partially Implemented” or “Not Implemented,” a corrective action plan (CAP) is developed to bring those areas into compliance with the relevant statutes and regulations. Department staff work with districts and charter schools on the development of an appropriate CAP.

PSM staff also provide ongoing technical assistance as the school or district is implementing the approved CAP. **School districts and charter schools must demonstrate effective resolution of noncompliance identified by the Department as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from the issuance of the Department’s Final Monitoring Report.**

Where criteria are rated “Prior Noncompliance - Corrective Action Under Review,” the district/charter school will work with staff from the specific Department office that identified the noncompliance to develop a corrective action plan.

For more information regarding the Integrated Monitoring Review Process, including district and parent resources, please visit < <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/integrated/default.html>>.

INTEGRATED MONITORING REVIEW DETAILS for Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducted an Integrated Monitoring Review at the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School during the week of May 5, 2025, to evaluate the implementation of Group B Universal Standards in the program areas of special education, civil rights, and other related general education requirements. The team appreciated the opportunity to interview staff and parents, to observe classroom facilities, and to review the programs underway in the school.

In preparing this report, the team reviewed extensive written documentation regarding the operation of the school's programs, together with information gathered by means of the following Department program review methods:

School Civil Rights Self-Assessment Phase:

- Review of civil rights documentation for required elements including document uploads.
- Upon completion, the civil rights self-assessment was submitted to the Department for review.

Discovery Phase:

- Review of key data points focused on educational results and functional outcomes. For more details regarding the data review, please see the PSM procedures at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/procedures.docx>.

Engagement Phase:

- Interviews of administrative staff consistent with those criteria selected for onsite verification.
- Interview of a special education parent advisory council (SEPAC) representative.
- Review of additional documents for special education and civil rights.
- Surveys of parents of students in special education: Parents of students in special education were sent a survey that solicited information regarding their experiences with the school's implementation of special education programs, related services, and procedural requirements.
- Observations of classrooms and other facilities: The onsite team visited a sample of classrooms and other school facilities used in the delivery of programs and services to determine general levels of compliance with program requirements.

The Integrated Monitoring Review Report includes those criteria that were found by the team to be implemented in a "Commendable" manner, as well as criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented," "Not Implemented," "Implementation in Progress", and "Prior Noncompliance - Corrective Action Under Review." (Refer to the "Definition of Compliance Ratings" section of the report.) Reports do not include criteria receiving a rating of "Implemented" or "Not Applicable." This will allow the school and the Department to focus their efforts on those areas requiring corrective action. Schools are expected to incorporate the corrective actions into their improvement plans, including their professional development plans.

DEFINITION OF COMPLIANCE RATINGS

Commendable	Any requirement or aspect of a requirement implemented in an exemplary manner significantly beyond the requirements of law or regulation.
Implemented	The requirement is substantially met in all important aspects.
Implementation in Progress	This rating is used for criteria containing new or updated legal requirements; the district has implemented any old requirements contained in the criterion and is training staff or beginning to implement the new requirements in such a way that the onsite team anticipates that the new requirements will be implemented by the end of the school year.
Partially Implemented	The requirement, in one or several important aspects, is not entirely met.
Not Implemented	The requirement is totally or substantially not met.
Prior Noncompliance - Corrective Action Under Review	A finding of noncompliance was made by another office in the Department and the school/district is currently undergoing corrective action activities.
Not Applicable	The requirement does not apply to the school district or charter school.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE CRITERIA RATINGS

	Universal Standards Special Education	Universal Standards Civil Rights and Other General Education Requirements
IMPLEMENTED	SE 15, SE 32, SE 35, SE 36, SE 50, SE 51, SE 52, SE 52A, SE 54, SE 55, SE 56	CR 3, CR 7, CR 7A, CR 7B, CR 8, CR 10B, CR 10C, CR 12A, CR 20, CR 21, CR 22, CR 23, CR 24, CR 25
PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED		CR 10A, CR 17A
NOT IMPLEMENTED	None	
NOT APPLICABLE		CR 7C, CR 16

The full list of criteria and information regarding the requirements can be found in Appendix B of the Tiered Focused Monitoring Toolkit available at < <https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/tfm-toolkit.docx>>.

**CIVIL RIGHTS
METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR)
AND
OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION
REQUIREMENTS**

**LEGAL STANDARDS,
COMPLIANCE RATINGS AND
FINDINGS**

CRITERION NUMBER	CIVIL RIGHTS METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR) AND OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS V. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
	Legal Standard
CR 10A	<p>Student handbooks and codes of conduct</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The superintendent of every school district shall publish the district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. prohibit the use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, the school facilities or on the school grounds or on school buses by any individual, including school personnel; b. restrict operators of school buses and personal motor vehicles, including students, faculty, staff and visitors, from idling such vehicles on school grounds; c. prohibit bullying as defined in section 37O and shall include an age-appropriate summary of the student-related sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan required by said section 37O; d. include a nondiscrimination policy that is consistent with M.G.L. c. 76, s. 5, and affirms the school's non-tolerance for harassment or discrimination, including that based upon race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. e. include the school's procedure for accepting, investigating and resolving complaints alleging discrimination or harassment; and f. state the disciplinary measures that the school may impose if it determines that harassment or discrimination has occurred. 2. The district's code of conduct for students shall contain the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Procedures ensuring due process in disciplinary proceedings, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. standards and procedures for suspension and expulsion of students; ii. procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities in accordance with IDEA and Section 504; iii. standards and procedures to assure school building security and safety of students and school personnel; and iv. the disciplinary measures to be taken in cases involving the possession or use of illegal substances or weapons, the use of force, vandalism, or violation of a student's civil rights. b. Procedures ensuring students are re-engaged in learning, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A requirement that any principal, headmaster, superintendent, or person acting as a decision-maker at a student meeting or hearing, when deciding consequences for the student, shall consider ways to reengage the student in the learning process; and shall not suspend or expel a student until alternative remedies have been employed and their use and results documented, following and in direct response to a specific incident or incidents, unless specific reasons are documented as to why such alternative remedies are unsuitable or counter-productive, and in cases where the student's continued presence in school would pose a specific, documentable concern about the infliction of serious bodily injury or other serious harm upon another person while in school. ii. A list of alternative remedies which may include but shall not be

CRITERION NUMBER	CIVIL RIGHTS METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION (CR) AND OTHER RELATED GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS V. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	
	Legal Standard	
	<p>limited to: (i) mediation; (ii) conflict resolution; (iii) restorative justice; and (iv) collaborative problem solving. The principal, headmaster, superintendent, or person acting as a decision-maker shall also implement school- or district-wide models to re-engage students in the learning process which shall include but not be limited to: (i) positive behavioral interventions and supports models and (ii) trauma sensitive learning models; provided, however, that school- or district-wide models shall not be considered a direct response to a specific incident.</p> <p>3. The principal of every school containing grades 9-12, in consultation with the school council, prepares a student handbook and distributes it to all students, parents, and school personnel annually; the school council reviews and revises the student code of conduct every spring to consider changes in disciplinary policy to take effect in September of the following school year, but may consider policy changes at any time.</p> <p>4. The district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers contains relevant sections of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff and relevant sections addressing the bullying of students by a school staff member.</p>	
	Section 504; M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H; M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H 3/4; 603 CMR 53.00; 603 CMR 26.08 as amended by Chapter 199 of the Acts of 2011; M.G.L. c.71, s.37H3/4(b), as amended; M.G.L. c. 71 s.37O	
	Rating: Partially Implemented	District Response Required: Yes

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:

Document review and staff interviews indicated that the following procedures were recently updated to include all requirements and approved by the Board of Trustees:

- *Due process regarding the discipline of students with disabilities; and*
- *Superintendent's hearing to appeal the principal's decision to impose a long-term suspension.*

However, these updates have not yet been added to the code of conduct and disseminated to the school community.

CRITERION NUMBER		
	Legal Standard	
CR 17A	<p>Use of physical restraint on any student enrolled in a publicly-funded education program</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public education programs must develop and implement written restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures consistent with new regulations 603 CMR 46.00 regarding appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures shall be annually reviewed and provided to program staff and made available to parents of enrolled students. b. restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures shall include, but not be limited to: methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide; methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use; a description and explanation of the program's alternatives to physical restraint and method of physical restraint in emergency situations; a statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted pursuant to 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of restraint inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.03; a description of the program's training requirements, reporting requirements, and follow-up procedures; a procedure for receiving and investigating complaints; a procedure for conducting periodic review of data and documentation on the program's use of restraint; a procedure for implementing the reporting requirements; a procedure for making both oral and written notification to the parent; and a procedure for the use of time-out. 2. Each principal or director shall determine a time and method to provide all program staff with training regarding the program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used. Such training shall occur within the first month of each school year and, for employees hired after the school year begins, within a month of their employment. 3. At the beginning of each school year, the principal of each public education program or his/her designee shall identify program staff who are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. Such staff shall have in-depth training on the use of physical restraint. 4. The program administers physical restraint on students only in emergency situations of last resort when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm and with extreme caution in order to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. 	
	IDEA 2004; M.G.L. c. 71, § 37G; 603 CMR 46.00	
	Rating: Partially Implemented	District Response Required: Yes

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Findings:

Document review and staff interviews indicated that the school's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures are inconsistent with regulations under 603 CMR 46.00 and do not include the following requirements:

- *A statement indicating that prone restraint shall be prohibited except on an individual student basis and only under the circumstances of 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b)(1-6); and*
- *Training content requirements for all staff.*

Additionally, the school's restraint prevention and behavior support training does not include the following requirements:

- *The role of the student and family in preventing restraint;*
- *Information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used; and*
- *Administering physical restraint in accordance with medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavior intervention plans applicable to an individual student.*

Furthermore, the school's training materials contain erroneous information regarding reporting requirements.

This Integrated Monitoring Review Report is also available at:
<https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/reports/>.
Profile information supplied by each charter school and school district, including information for
individual schools within districts, is available at
<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/>.

WBMS Final Report

File Name: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School IMR Report 2025
Last Revised on: **6/27/25**
Prepared by: **SKM**

Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: August 13, 2025

Prepared by: Chris Kusek, Head of School & Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning

Topic: Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures

Purpose:

To adopt the updated Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures to ensure HCCPS is in full compliance with Massachusetts regulations (603 CMR 46.00), maintains a safe and supportive learning environment, and codifies best practices for restraint prevention, use, documentation, and review.

Background:

Massachusetts law and DESE regulations require all public schools to maintain and implement a physical restraint policy that prioritizes prevention, ensures restraint is used only as an emergency procedure of last resort, and outlines clear documentation, training, and reporting requirements.

HCCPS's updated policy reflects:

- Expanded prevention strategies, including proactive behavioral supports and team-based intervention planning.
- Detailed definitions aligned with state regulations.
- Clear prohibitions on mechanical, medication, and seclusion restraints.
- Procedures for documentation, parent notification, DESE reporting, and internal review.
- Staff training requirements for both all-program staff and in-depth trained personnel.
- Formal complaint resolution procedures for students and families.

Proposal:

Adopt the revised Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures as outlined in the attached document, which includes:

- Clear definitions and legal citations.
- Alternatives to restraint and prevention strategies.
- Conditions for the use of physical restraint.
- Safety, documentation, and follow-up requirements.
- Training requirements for staff.
- Formal complaint procedures.

Rationale:

- Legal Compliance: Fully aligns with Massachusetts regulations and DESE guidance.
- Safety & Well-being: Establishes safeguards to protect students, staff, and the school

community.

- Clarity & Accountability: Provides a consistent framework for response, documentation, and review.
- Professional Standards: Ensures all staff are trained in prevention and intervention strategies.

Fiscal or Operational Implications:

- Minimal Fiscal Impact: Costs associated with required annual staff training and potential in-depth training for designated staff.
- Operational Impacts: Annual policy review and ongoing data collection, analysis, and reporting to DESE.

Recommendation:

The administration recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the revised Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures as presented, effective immediately upon adoption, with annual review as part of the HCCPS policy review cycle.

Attachment: Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures

Physical Restraint Policy & Procedures

1. Introduction

It is the policy of HCCPS to promote a safe and productive workplace and educational environment for its employees and students and to ensure that every student in HCCPS is free from the use of physical restraint in compliance with the applicable Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations.

This policy shall not be construed to limit the protection afforded to students under other federal and state laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services. Additionally, this policy shall not be construed to preclude any teacher, employee, or agent of HCCPS from using reasonable and necessary force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

What follows are the legal citations, procedures and guidelines that include: (1) appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention; and (2) alternative methods that should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, including alternative methods in emergency situations that avoid resorting to physical restraint.

2. Definitions

- **Consent** shall mean agreement by a parent/guardian who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which agreement is sought, in their native language or other mode of communication, that the parent/guardian understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity and understands that the agreement is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.
- **Mechanical restraint** shall mean the use of a physical device to restrict the movement of a student or the movement. A protective or stabilizing device ordered by a physician shall not be considered a mechanical restraint. The use of a mechanical restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and consented to in writing by the parent/guardian of the student.
- **Medication restraint** shall mean the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. The use of medication restraint is prohibited unless explicitly authorized by a physician and consented to by the parent/guardian of the student.
- **Physical escort** shall mean a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
- **Physical restraint** shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Additionally, physical restraint does not include: providing brief

physical contact, without force, to promote student safety or limit self injurious behavior, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

- **Prone restraint** shall mean a restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the prone position. The use of prone restraint shall be prohibited except on an individual student basis and only under the circumstances of 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b)(1-6).
- **Restraint** shall mean limitation on a student's physical movement using force against the student's resistance.
- **Seclusion** shall mean the involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area, with or without adult supervision, from which the student is not permitted to leave. The term does not include: a classroom or school environment where, as a general rule, all students need permission to leave the room or area, such as to use the restroom; a behavior support technique that is part of the district's, school's, or program's designated procedures for behavior support, which involves the monitored separation of a student in an unlocked setting, from which the student is allowed to leave and it is implemented for the purpose of calming; or placing a student in a separate location within a classroom with others or with an instructor, so long as the student has the same opportunity to receive and engage in instruction.
- **Time-out** shall mean a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member in an unlocked setting from which the student is permitted to leave. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

2. Alternatives To Physical Restraint

HCCPS works to foster strong, healthy relationships between faculty/staff and students. Central to the mission of HCCPS is to create and sustain a strong community. This is achieved through a host of structures that include: regular morning meetings; mixed age groupings; weekly All School assemblies; proactive teaching and modeling of positive behavioral expectations; direct teaching of social skills by classroom teachers, speech and language teachers, and the school counselor. In addition, the school provides school-wide professional development focused on identifying and preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student.

In addition, grade specific SERS (Special Education & Related Service) teams meet bi-weekly and include regular and special education teachers, the school counselor, occupational therapist, speech and language therapist, and administration. The purpose of these bi-weekly meetings is to plan appropriate interventions and support for students.

For any student with a history of significant emotional or behavioral challenges—including at-risk behaviors such as harm to self or others—or for any student who has required physical restraint, the Team must develop a Safety Behavior Intervention Plan. This plan should outline targeted strategies and supports, which may include de-escalation techniques, counseling services, monitoring protocols, data collection, and frequent review meetings to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. Teams are also encouraged to recommend supportive family outreach, emphasizing regular communication and collaboration with caregivers.

In conjunction with these efforts, school personnel should remain vigilant and, whenever possible, promptly notify school administrators, the administrative response team, and/or other appropriate staff if a potentially dangerous situation arises, so that additional support can be provided without delay.

The following strategies are utilized to help students manage behavior, de-escalate potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student, and maintain a safe and secure school environment:

- Time-out: Students who are removed from class activities, whether directed to do so or by their own volition, must be supervised during this “time out.” Time out may take place in the classroom or in a different location . Alternate locations for time out must be safe and appropriate to calming. Time out lasting more than half of the school day will be considered an In School Suspension, regardless of whether the student chose to leave or was told to do so by staff.
- Physical Escort: Physical escort is not considered to be physical restraint. Physical escort is defined as a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
- Remove Other Students: If it is not feasible to have a student experiencing distress move to a more private and safe area in order to de-escalate, consider the feasibility of having other staff assist and monitor the removal of other students to another area within the school until the student de-escalates.

Other restraint preventions designed to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and suicide include:

- Active listening
- Use of a low non-threatening voice
- Limiting the number of adults providing direction to the student
- Offering the student a choice
- Not blocking the student's access to an escape route
- Suggesting possible resolutions to the student
- Verbal prompt - A verbal prompt is communicating what is expected behavior by clearly

stating instructions and expectations.

- Physical Redirection -A physical redirection is done by temporarily placing one hand on each of the student's shoulders, without force, and redirecting the student to the learning activity, classroom or safe location.

3. Use/Prohibition of Restraint

Hilltown Charter is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. Physical restraint is considered an emergency procedure of last resort and is only used when a student's behavior poses an immediate threat of serious harm to self or others. The following outlines the conditions under which restraint may be used, as well as the procedures and prohibitions in accordance with state regulations (603 CMR 46.00)

(a) Mechanical restraint, medication restraint, and seclusion shall be prohibited in public education programs.

(b) Prone restraint shall be prohibited in public education programs except on an individual student basis, and only under the following circumstances:

1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
2. All other forms of physical restraints have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others;
3. There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;
4. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
5. The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and such use has been approved in writing by the principal; and,
6. The program has documented 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b) 1 through 5 in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation.

(c) Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall be prohibited in public education programs except when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

(d) All physical restraints, including prone restraint where permitted, shall be administered in compliance with 603 CMR 46.05.

(2) Physical restraint shall not be used:

(a) As a means of discipline or punishment;

(b) When the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis,

communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting;

(c) As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm; or

(d) As a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior. Physical restraint is an emergency procedure of last resort.

(3) Limitations on use of restraint. Physical restraint in a public education program shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or another member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

(4) Referral to law enforcement or other state agencies. Nothing in 603 CMR 46.00 prohibits:

(a) The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or other individual;

(b) Law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including the physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or

(c) The exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter pursuant to M.G.L. c. 119, § 51A. 603 CMR 46.00 shall not be used to deter any individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency.

4. Proper Administration of a Physical Restraint

Whenever possible, only trained school personnel should administer physical restraints. Trained personnel are those who have completed the in-depth or basic training as outlined in applicable regulations. When feasible, the restraint should be witnessed by at least one additional adult who is not directly involved in the physical intervention.

In situations where physical restraint is necessary, staff must use only the amount of force reasonably necessary to protect the student or others from immediate physical harm. The method used should prioritize safety, be appropriate to the situation, and comply with the safety requirements outlined in this policy. All restraints must be discontinued as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger, shows signs of respiratory distress, or exhibits indications of severe physical or emotional distress (e.g., difficulty breathing, sustained crying, or coughing).

While the school aims to ensure that restraints are administered only by trained personnel, the law allows any school employee to use reasonable and necessary force in emergency situations to protect students, staff, or others from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

At an appropriate time after a student has been released from a restraint, the Student Behavior Support Coordinator or their designee will ensure that follow-up procedures are implemented. These include:

- Reviewing the incident with the student to help them process the event and address the

behavior that led to the restraint;

- Debriefing with the staff members who administered the restraint to confirm that proper procedures were followed and to identify any areas for improvement;
- Providing support to any students who witnessed the incident, which may include teacher- or counselor-led debriefs or restorative practices as appropriate; and
- Ensuring written notification of the incident is submitted to the Head of School and the Director of Teaching and Learning.

These steps are critical to ensuring student and staff safety, promoting learning and reflection, and maintaining a culture of accountability and care.

5. Safety Requirements

No restraints shall be administered in such a way that a student is prevented from breathing or speaking. During the administration of a restraint, school personnel shall continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color, temperature, and respiration. Any and all restraint shall be immediately released upon a determination by the school personnel administering the restraint that the student is no longer at risk of causing imminent physical harm to himself, herself or others.

Additionally, restraints shall be administered in such a way as to prevent or minimize physical harm. If, at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates difficulty breathing or significant physical distress, including but not limited to, trouble breathing or prolonged coughing or crying, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance. School personnel shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student, as well as known or suspected trauma history.

At any time during the administration of a physical restraint, school personnel may take steps to seek medical assistance if it appears that the student is demonstrating significant physical distress.

6. Documentation, Reporting and Follow-up Procedures

Every instance of physical restraint must be documented in writing and reported to the Head of School. Documentation must include the name of the student restrained, the circumstances leading to the restraint, the de-escalation strategies attempted, the type and duration of restraint used, the names of staff involved, and any injuries or medical care provided. The Head of School shall maintain an ongoing log of all reported instances of physical restraint.

The staff member who administered the restraint must verbally inform the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning, or their designee as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the school day on which the restraint occurred. A written report must be submitted to the Head of School no later than the following school day. If the Head of School administers a restraint, they must complete the written

report and submit it to a designated team appointed by the Board of Trustees for review.

- **Notification to Parents/Guardians**

The Head of School or designee must verbally inform the student's parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the incident.

A written report must be sent to the parent or guardian within three (3) school working days of the restraint. This may be sent by email or postal mail and should be dated to reflect delivery. The written report must include all required elements under 603 CMR 46.06(4). Parents and guardians must be offered an opportunity to respond in writing to the report and the incident.

- **Student Support Team Review**

If a student is restrained the Head of School or designee will convene a Student Support Team to assess the student's needs. The team must:

- Review all written reports and any comments from the student or their family,
- Analyze the circumstances of each incident (e.g., time of day, staff involved, antecedents), and
- Develop a plan to address underlying causes and prevent future restraint. This plan should include alternative strategies, such as de-escalation techniques, behavioral supports, and any necessary changes to the student's support plan or IEP.

The Head of School or designee must ensure that a record of each such review is maintained and made available to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) upon request.

Monthly Schoolwide Review

The Head of School must conduct a monthly review of all schoolwide restraint data. This review must consider:

- Frequency, timing, and patterns of restraint,
- The number and duration of incidents per student,
- Any resulting injuries, and
- Staff members involved.

Based on this analysis, the Head of School may determine whether updates are needed to policies or procedures, whether additional training is warranted (e.g., in positive behavioral interventions and supports), or whether other steps should be taken to reduce or eliminate the use of physical restraint.

DESE Reporting

If a restraint occurs, the school must submit a report to DESE within three (3) school working days via the Security Portal. The school must also maintain a 30-day rolling log of all restraints, which must be made available to DESE upon request.

7. Training Requirements

A. All Program Staff

Within the first month of each school year, School Administration shall provide all program staff with training on restraint prevention and behavior support.

The training shall consist of the following: (a) this policy and related procedures and guidelines; (b) interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion; (c) when behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restraint of extended duration; (d) administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student, including known or suspected trauma history; (e) the role of the student, staff and family in preventing use of restraint; and (f) identification of program staff who have received in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.

Additionally, for all new school employees that are hired after the start of the school year, School Administration shall within the first month of their employment provide the new employees with training on this policy.

B. Staff Authorized to Serve As a School-Wide Resource on the Proper Administration of Physical Restraints

At the beginning of each school year, the Head of School and Director of Teaching and Learning shall identify program staff that are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

The content of the in-depth training shall be competency-based and at least sixteen (16) hours in length. Such individuals shall participate in at least one refresher course during subsequent school years of no less than eight (8) hours in length. Training shall include, but not be limited to: (a) appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building and the use of alternatives to restraint; (b) description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of students that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted; (c) the simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance; (d) instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints; (e) instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects; and (f) demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint.

8. Complaint Procedures

A. Informal Resolution of Concerns About the Use of Physical Restraint

Before initiating a formal complaint procedure, a student or their parent/guardian who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve their concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint by raising the issue with the Head of School. The student and/or their parent/guardian should direct their concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint to the Head of School within ten (10) days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school as detailed herein. The Head of School shall attempt, within their authority, to work with the individual to resolve the complaint fairly and expeditiously. If the student and/or their parent/guardian are not satisfied with the resolution, or if the student and/or their parent/guardian does not choose informal resolution, then the student and/or their parent/guardian may proceed with the formal complaint process detailed herein.

B. Formal Resolution of Concern About the Use of Physical Restraint

A student or their parent/guardian, who has concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint, may seek to resolve their concerns regarding a specific use of a physical restraint by submitting a written complaint to the Board of Trustees. The student and/or their parent/guardian should submit this letter to the Board of Trustees within twenty (20) days of the parent/guardian's receipt of the written report from the school as detailed herein. The written complaint shall include (a) the name of the student; (b) the name of the school where the physical restraint allegedly occurred; (c) the name of the individuals involved in the alleged physical restraint; (d) the basis of the complaint or concern; and (e) the corrective action being sought.

C. The Board of Trustees, through its designees, shall conduct an investigation into the complaint promptly after receiving the complaint. In the course of its investigation, the Board of Trustees and/or its designees shall contact those individuals that have been referred to as having pertinent information related to the complaint. Strict timelines cannot be set for conducting the investigation because each set of circumstances is different. The Board of Trustees and/or its designees will make sure that the complaint is handled as quickly as is feasible. After completing the formal investigation, the Board of Trustees shall contact the individual who filed the complaint regarding the outcome of its investigation and its determination as to whether any corrective action is warranted.

Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: August 13, 2025

Prepared by: Chris Kusek, Head of School & Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Director of Teaching and Learning
Topic: Gender Nondiscrimination Policy

Purpose:

To adopt a formal Gender Nondiscrimination Policy that affirms HCCPS's commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive educational environment free from discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, in compliance with Massachusetts law.

Background:

HCCPS has a longstanding commitment to equity, inclusion, and respect for all members of our community. While our practices already align with state and federal protections for students and staff regarding gender identity, a formal policy ensures consistency, transparency, and accountability.

Massachusetts law explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender identity in public schools, and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provides clear guidance on name/pronoun use, student records, facilities access, and staff training.

Currently, HCCPS addresses these issues through practice and staff guidance; however, codifying this in policy strengthens protections, supports staff in implementation, and signals our values to the community.

Proposal:

Adopt the attached Gender Nondiscrimination Policy, which includes:

- Definitions of key terms (e.g., gender identity, gender expression, transgender, nonbinary, gender expansive).
- Prohibition of bias-based conduct, discrimination, and harassment based on gender identity or expression, including misgendering or outing.
- Clear procedures for honoring students' chosen names and pronouns, with or without legal documentation.
- Privacy and confidentiality protections aligned with Massachusetts Student Records Regulations.
- Access to restrooms consistent with gender identity and provision of all-gender restroom options.
- Commitment to integrating education and training on gender identity into curriculum, leadership development, and staff professional development.

Rationale:

- Legal Compliance: Aligns with Massachusetts General Laws and DESE guidance.

- Student Safety & Well-being: Supports mental health, academic engagement, and belonging.
- Clarity & Consistency: Provides a standard for staff and administrators to follow.
- Community Values: Reinforces HCCPS's mission of inclusion, respect, and equity.

Fiscal or Operational Implications:

- Minimal Fiscal Impact:
 - Occasional costs for professional development resources.
- Operational Impacts:
 - Annual mandatory staff training content updates.
 - Administrative tracking of chosen names/pronouns in student records.

Recommendation:

The administration recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the proposed Gender Nondiscrimination Policy as presented, effective immediately upon adoption, with annual review as part of the HCCPS policy review cycle.

Attachment: Proposed Gender Nondiscrimination Policy for HCCPS



GABS Committee Meeting Minutes – Tues, June 3, 2025, 8:30 am

Meeting Location: HCCPS

Present: Emily Boddy; Tiffany Ross; Kate Aleo

Guests:

Regrets: Lindsay Fogg-Willits, Sara Scheiffelin;

Notetaker: Emily

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Check-in/ Announcements	Checked in.	
JEDI	Woven into other discussions	
Approve May 2025 Minutes	Approved by Consensus	
Succession Planning - Discussion and Decision	Possible parents to pursue: Maggie N. (Indigos) - does work that can translate well (writing/grantwriting) Sarah-Jane P. (Indigos) - Emily is meeting with her in June to discuss Allison G. (Blues) - marketing background Wendy B (purples/indigos) - education background	
Board Leadership + Committee Roles - Discussion	Lily - President (one year, train Neal /roll into pres support 26-27) Neal - VP (one year, rolls into Pres 26-27) Tala - 2nd VP through Sept/Oct / Personnel Chair Emily - Clerk/GABSChair	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

	Kylan - Treasurer/Finance Chair Steve - JEDI (?) Chair Kate - GABS member Ben - Personnel Member Lauren A - Grace - optional Andrea - optional	
Member term renewal Discussion	Grace will be proposed for renewal at June Board meeting and will be approved by cooperative at Annual Meeting	Emily will propose this at June BoT meeting.
Board Book Organizational Plan - Discussion	Emily will work with Kathleen to pick up where she let off in the reorganization.	
New Business	Succession planning proposal for JulyBoT meeting Updated succession plan document for BoT July meeting Board Book Organizational Plan	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	Meeting dates for the year, 8:30am: TBD	
Adjournment	949 am	

Agenda items for next month:

GABS agenda items for next BOT meeting: Co-VP proposal.

Kathleen Hulton

khulton@gmail.com

15 Main Street Florence, MA | (413) 262-7831

Work Experience

University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, MA

Adjunct Instructor

Teach 1-2 Online Classes per semester or term

Lecturer, Department of Sociology 2019 - 2023

- Taught 3-4 sociology courses with a total enrollment of 500 students per semester
- Taught courses ranging from small seminars to lectures of 325 students
- Supervise 5-8 graduate teaching assistants per semester
- Advise 5-12 Honors students, independent study students, and undergraduate TAs per semester
- Coordinate accommodations with Disability Services ~25 students per semester

Greenfield Community College Greenfield, MA

Visiting Instructor, Social Sciences Department 2017- present

- Teach introductory and advanced sociology courses both in person and online
- Advise diverse and nontraditional students of all ages and backgrounds
- Teach a core required course for Addiction Studies program, "Drugs and Society"

University of Massachusetts Amherst Amherst, MA

Graduate Instructor, Department of Sociology 2005-2019

- Taught 1-2 sociology courses per semester while completing coursework, MA thesis, and dissertation
- Taught a wide variety of courses in methods, statistics, and theory, as well as gender, racial, and economic inequality

Smith College, Northampton, MA

Visiting Instructor, Department of Sociology 2011, 2016-2018

- Taught small, advanced sociology courses at a selective liberal arts college
- Navigated complex and controversial subject matter with students during times of campus-wide change, protest, and tensions involving race and social class

The Hopkins Inn New Preston, CT

Waitstaff supervisor 1998-2006 (seasonal)

- Began as waitstaff and was promptly given supervisory responsibilities
- Performed multiple tasks while interacting with customers and co-workers in a fast-paced contemporary Austrian restaurant
- Supervised and trained waitstaff
- Resolved conflict while maximizing customer satisfaction
- Helped to plan and execute small events and weddings up to 50 people

Common Plea Catering Pittsburgh, PA

Catering waitstaff 1999-2002

- Worked large catered events of up to 500 people in diverse settings

Professional Activities

2002 - Present Member, American Sociological Association

2012 - 2020 Regular Reviewer, Gender & Society

2004 - 2019 Member, UMass Sociology Graduate Student Association

2011 - 2012 Graduate Representative, Mentoring Task Force, University of Massachusetts

2007 - 2008 Organizer, Graduate Student Recruitment Event, University of Massachusetts

2005 - 2006 Co-Chair, UMass Sociology Graduate Student Association

2001- 2002 Co-organizer, Transcending Boundaries Conference, University of Pittsburgh

2000 - 2002 Member, Organization of Women Graduate Students, University of Pittsburgh

Skills

General: Data analysis, public speaking to groups over 300, critical thinking, organization, communication

Technical: Advanced in Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, Google Workspace, Moodle, Blackboard

Proficient in iMovie, STATA, SPSS, Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, Instagram, TikTok

Awards and Academic Honors

2023 Finalist, Distinguished Teaching Award, University of Massachusetts Amherst

2022 Finalist, Distinguished Teaching Award, University of Massachusetts Amherst

2006 Andy Anderson Award for Teaching, University of Massachusetts Amherst

2006 Sociology Department Service Award, University of Massachusetts Amherst

2003 Delta Omega Best Masters Essay, University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health

Education

A.B. Biology (magna cum laude), Bowdoin College

MPH Behavioral and Community Health Sciences, University of Pittsburgh

M.A. Sociology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

PhD Sociology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

ADAM C. SZYMKOWICZ

88 South St.
Easthampton, MA 01027

Cell: 802-989-3536
adamszymkowicz@gmail.com

EDUCATION:

University of Massachusetts Amherst
TEACH 180 Days in Springfield Program

Masters of Education,
Class of 2013

St. Lawrence University, Canton, NY
Major: English, Writing Concentration

Bachelor of Arts, Class of 2005

LICENSURE:

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Professional License English (5-8), English as a Second Language (5-12)
License #458068

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

7th and 8th Grade ELA/Social Studies/Civics Teacher,
White Brook Middle School/Mountain View Middle School
Easthampton, MA
August 2016 - Present

Classroom Teacher, 6th/7th/8th Grade ELA, Chestnut TAG Middle School,
Springfield, MA
August, 2014 - June 2016

Classroom Teacher, 7th Grade ELA, Baystate Academy Charter Public School,
Springfield, MA
August, 2013 - June 2014

Clinical Teacher, Springfield Renaissance School, Springfield, MA
January, 2013--June, 2013

Student Teacher, Springfield Renaissance School, Springfield, MA
August, 2012--January, 2013

Paraprofessional, Fairview Veteran's Memorial Middle School, Chicopee, MA
August, 2010--June, 2012