



HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

THURSDAY Feb 12th, 2026 6:30pm

HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Or Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84948181413?pwd=OO475dU8403OfbwMCEdidBM7z2IU9D.1>

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

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

Prework: Review the HOS Midyear Reflection and Feedback Summary; Review Q2 Financials and Fiscal Policy Updates

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Topic	Who	Action	Est. Start Time
Welcoming (read mission statement): (7 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper, norm observer ● BOT visibility this month ● Approve minutes from Jan BoT mtg 	Lily Newman	Decision	6:30 pm
Public Comment (5 min)	Lily Newman		6:35
HOS Midyear Performance Check Reflection (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Framing, process ● Reflection from HOS, BOT President ● Discussion 	Lily Newman Chris Kusek		6:40
School Leader Updates (15 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staffing b. Initiatives and Events c. Key spring dates d. Other 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Meghan Carroll	Discussion	7:00



GABS (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● March Meeting of the Cooperative ● New member vote and welcome: Sarah Buttenweiser 	Emily Boddy	Discussion & Vote Vote	7:15
Personnel Committee (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hiring Policy ● Substitute Compensation Policy ● Salary scale updates and next steps 	Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion & Vote Discussion	7:25
Finance Committee (15 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Q2 Financials ● Fiscal Policy Updates 	Chris Kusek (Kylan Mandile)	Discussion Vote	7:35
Education Committee (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updates, Membership ● Next Steps 	Adam Szymkowicz Lauren Ames	Discussion	7:50
JEDI (5 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approve adapted plan 	Kathleen Hulton	Vote	8:00
General Updates & Reminders (5 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feb BOT Office Hours 2/26 ● LRP update in Mar ● Mar Annual Mtg ● BOT retreat in May 	Lily Newman	Discussion	8:05
Wrap Up (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action items review ● Next steps/March meeting agenda items ● Snacks and drinks for February ● Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb 	Lily Newman	Decision	8:10
Adjournment	Lily Newman	Decision	8:15



Board Collaboration Norms - Working Draft

1. Assume Positive Intent and Honor Impact

We approach one another with trust, curiosity, and generosity. We acknowledge that our words and decisions have real impact and take responsibility for listening, clarifying, and adjusting when needed.

2. Shared Voice and Attentive Listening

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

3. Focus on Our Role and Work

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

4. Commitment to Preparation, Process and Due Diligence

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

5. Consensus Decision-Making

We commit to making all decisions by consensus, as is outlined in our bylaws.

6. Rigorous Dialogue with Respect and Care

We welcome healthy debate and examine ideas fully and collaboratively. We work diligently while maintaining respect and care for one another. Disagreement is a contribution, not a conflict.

7. Collective Well-Being and Sustainable Participation

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



HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

January 15, 2026 6:30pm

At HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Also: Join Zoom Meeting

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

Present: Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Meghan Carroll, Grace Mrowicki, Tala Elia, Lily Newman, Emily Boddy, Lauren Ames, Adam Szymkowicz, Neal Teague

By Zoom: Steve Sell

Regrets: Andrea Hermans, Ben Carlis, Kathleen Hulton, Kylan Mandile

Guests: None

By Zoom: None

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: Lauren Ames

Timekeeper: Grace

Mission statement read by: Lauren Ames

Norms: Lily

Topic (estimated time)	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Tala Elia): (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgement ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper ● BOT Visibility leading into start of year ● Approve minutes from December BoT mtg <p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>Appreciations:</p> <p>Benefit Concert - great turnout, appreciate the organizers and the parents who performed, appreciation to Tiffany + Sasha for organizing..</p> <p>Ski Club - great kick off, 2 weeks in.</p> <p>Solstice - went really well and appreciated the video link to the event in the newsletter.</p> <p>Parents in the arts - those at the benefit</p> <p>Chris appreciates Meghan and Rebecca, managing change in leadership structure. Very challenging, especially mid-year.</p>	<p>Tala motioned to approve and Lauren seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p>

Final Minutes Approved on: Feb 12, 2026

	<p>Approached with grace. Grateful for others who support this change.</p> <p>Board Visibility: Coffee hour Jan 20 Ski/Ride Club</p> <p>Minutes: No changes.</p>	
<p>Public Comment (5 min)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>School Leader Updates (20 min)</p> <p>a. Staffing</p> <p>b. Initiatives and Events</p> <p>c. Key spring dates</p> <p>d. Other</p> <p>- Chris and Rebecca</p>	<p>a. Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kerry is on leave and Micheala has stepped into the Blues. Cass is acting as the point person for Kids' Club. <p>b. Initiatives and Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Started Schedule Design Team working on 26-27 based on challenges and successes of this past year. This collaborative approach with a great team will be an improvement on the way it happened last year. Main challenges (esp in 5&6) have to do with snacktime, lunch length, increase time on learning reading and writing in 5 & 6 especially (perhaps ease off the full MS style schedule). Peer Leadership group in 5 & 6 has offered valuable feedback. ○ Civic Action Projects, PDday on Jan 26 focusing on problem solving for the chosen projects, with Inst of Humane Education (Renee) ○ PD follow up training with 2 Teach Global in humanities 	

	<p>and Math for co-teaching teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Events (Tiff): Benefit concert was a success, about 140 people, and est \$2,000 raised and great community connection; Thanks to Hilltown parents who performed, The Winter Pills and Appalachian Still, and Hilltown parents who hosted at Daily Operation ○ Upcoming: Advocacy Week is coming up - engaging charter school families to engage politically and otherwise. Focus this year is Fair Funding, specifically Fair Facilities Funding. \$1200k per child for facilities from state budget (not from sending districts) - approx \$687 less per child of what district schools spend. Goal is to narrow the gap, pressure state reps to close by \$200 per student (increase income of approx \$43,000 per year). Ask will be similar to last year - register, put on an email list and will receive info for advocating. <p>MLK Celebration is coming up on Feb 3 - guest presenters.</p> <p>Family Fun Night</p> <p>Bingo - Feb or March with the Mattrays</p>	
--	---	--

	<p>Middle School Dance - Winter in Paris Feb 27th</p>	
<p>Committee Reports/Updates (25 min) ● Personnel: Salary scales update; Hiring policy next steps; TA/Sub policy ● Education: Updates and next steps GABS: Annual meeting, recruitment, bylaws, announcements, other</p> <p>Tala Elia Rebecca Belcher-Timme/Adam Szymkowicz/Lauren Ames Emily Boddy</p>	<p>Personnel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Copy of the TA/Sub proposal was handed out and will be included in the final packet. Rebecca walked through changes and updates, as reflected in the policy. ● Grace shared the survey they are giving TAs and teachers about salary scales/changes. The Personnel Committee utilizes in helping to understand stress points and issues that are most important. ● They are working on something similar around comparable districts for other roles at Hilltown. ● Hiring Policy: need to discuss at next personnel meeting - redesigning caregiver input piece <p>Education: hold until after their first meeting.</p> <p>GABS: Annual Meeting date Mar 25, GABS will need help to plan and present; Lily suggests - Hilltown of the Future - and will support in facilitation. Emily will ask Tiffany to co-facilitate with Lily. Recruitment - GABS need Help with recruitment, reminded all that GABS facilitates succession planning and new membership, but the whole BoT needs to support with recruitment. We need people with financial/HR backgrounds, a clerk (ideally next year to shadow and train with Emily) Bylaws - please bring forth any bylaw change proposals that pertain to your committee, GABS also looking through bylaws, thinking through potential changes, ensuring all language is updated to reflect</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve with amendments as incorporated, and Lauren seconded; the Board approved The TA/Sub proposal with amendments by consensus</p>

	<p>current structure.</p> <p>New Community Member onboarding next month - Sarah Bittenweiser</p> <p>Emily Asks that members who roll off this year let me know if they plan to stay another term or not.</p> <p>Emily and Kathleen are working on major Board Member Handbook. We will ask that current members go through a draft version and help identify what needs to be added or changed</p> <p>GABS working to clean up policies to hand off to school 'ownership'</p> <p>Will distribute new template for proposals to the board: proposal with detail, eg pros/cons, urgency separate from the first draft of the policy itself, as it will appear when submitted to the record.</p>	
<p>HOS Draft Rubric (20 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review, clarifying questions, probing questions and feedback ● Next steps <p>Lily Newman, Grace Mrowicki</p>	<p>The Rubric is included in the packet - it was developed based on and expanded from the DESE rubric</p> <p>This is intended to reflect what the job is, but not intended to be used to go standard by standard to determine outcomes. Focal point of evaluation is the HOS goals, and those are derived from the Rubric. HOS might also be used to reflect and determine strengths and areas for growth.</p> <p>Tala asks about the way outgoing board leadership engages with the process.</p> <p>Chris reflects that the hope is the whole board evaluates to ensure continuity.</p> <p>Consider options for timing of when the Eval happens.</p> <p>BoT gave feedback/discussion, included the idea of simplifying the rubric versus keeping it robust.</p> <p>Lily suggests using the rubric for a year as a trial, and adjust as needed.</p>	

	Board Survey should run again, contributing to full picture; mid year report on HOS forthcoming.	
<p>General Updates & Reminders (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LRP update in Feb/Mar ● Feb BOT mtg - Thursday 2/12 ○ HOS midyear report ● Feb BOT Office Hours ● BOT retreat in May <p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>As listed.</p> <p>LRP Update forthcoming in March</p> <p>BoT office hours on Feb 26th after school, 3-4pm with Tala and Lily.</p> <p>BoT Retreat in May - meeting will run 5:30-8:30 instead of usual timing.</p>	
<p>Wrap Up (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action items review - Next steps/Nov meeting agenda items - Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb - Snacks and drinks for November 	<p>Action items:</p> <p>Emily will send bylaws for review and new policy template next week for use moving forward.</p> <p>Next Meeting Date: 2/12, 6:30pm</p> <p>NL Blurb: Emily Boddy</p> <p>Drinks: Emily</p> <p>Snacks: Adam</p> <p>Next Meeting:</p> <p>Mid year progress report</p> <p>By Law proposals</p> <p>New Member proposal</p> <p>Hiring Policy</p> <p>Annual Meeting Planning</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p> <p>Lily Newman</p>	Meeting adjourned at 8:00	Tala motioned to adjourn; Adam seconded.

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.

Midyear Reflection on HoS Professional Practice Goals – SY25–26

Presented by Chris Kusek, Head of School

February 2026

Introduction

At midyear, I want to start by naming something that feels important to say out loud: **there is so much to celebrate at Hilltown**. I feel this in classrooms, in hallways, and in the relationships I see every day.

When I set professional practice goals for the 2025–2026 school year, I understood this would be a year of meaningful growth and intentional change at Hilltown. Several important initiatives were planned and launched, including a long-awaited grade realignment, a school-wide Civics Action Initiative, EL Crew, a new 5–8 Humanities model, prioritization of co-teaching and inclusive practices, and updates to technology, student information systems, and the school website. These efforts build directly on structural decisions made in SY24–25 and are intentionally aligned with Hilltown’s Long-Range Plan and Board priorities.

Staff climate data reflects very strong confidence in the school and its direction. Across multiple measures, staff report that Hilltown is a safe place to work and learn, that relationships between staff and students are positive, and that they feel supported in their work.

In addition, in recent individual midyear check-ins with teachers, we are hearing consistent examples of what is working:

- Deep commitment to “connection before content”
- Strong relationships between students and adults
- Increasing confidence in inclusive and co-taught classrooms
- Meaningful student engagement through the Civics Action Initiative
- New teachers feeling welcomed, supported, and part of the community

These strengths reflect sustained, collective effort by staff and leadership. I am deeply grateful for the professionalism, care, and belief in students that Hilltown educators bring to their work every day.

At the same time, staff have been honest about real challenges. Many staff report concern about the pace of change this year. The administrative team takes this feedback seriously. We see it not as a lack of belief in Hilltown, but as a call to strengthen steadiness, coherence, and staff experience within an otherwise healthy and mission-aligned organization.

What follows is a reflection on how progress toward my professional practice goals is unfolding, where we see early impact, and how I am focusing the second half of the year on high-leverage practices that support retention, clarity, and staff feeling valued.

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

Progress to Date

The overall culture and climate of the school remain strong. Trust in Hilltown's mission and confidence in the school's direction are clear in staff feedback. Relationships with students continue to be a defining strength of the community, and many staff report feeling supported in their teaching and trusted to do their work well.

This year has also surfaced important learning for me about how change is experienced, even when the work is well aligned and thoughtfully designed. Staff feedback points to:

- Too many initiatives feeling active at once
- Limited breathing room
- Work being added without enough subtraction
- A desire for clearer priorities and shared framing

In the Fall, a significant portion of my time was necessarily devoted to student services work, which reduced my classroom presence and informal connection with teachers more than I intended. This feedback has reinforced how central visibility, access, and sense-making are, especially during periods of change.

Next Steps

- Be clearer about what is essential this year, what is being piloted, and what can wait
- Protect focus and reduce competing priorities where possible
- Increase classroom presence, informal check-ins, and visibility
- Continue individual midyear conversations with staff that explicitly communicate: *you are valued, your work matters, and we want you here.*
- Support direct reports in strengthening their own approaches to staff support and supervision
- More consistently include rationale and context alongside decisions

My goal is for the second half of the year to feel calmer, clearer, and more grounded.

Goal 2: Strengthen Inclusive Special Education and Student Services

Progress to Date

Student services work demanded sustained attention in the Fall, and that focus has resulted in meaningful structural gains:

- A well-defined MTSS Social-Emotional and Behavioral referral and intervention process
- Clearer timelines, roles, and documentation

- Stronger coordination among the Director of Teaching and Learning, School Psychologist, School Adjustment Counselor, Behavioral Support Coordinator, and School Nurse

These systems are contributing to stronger inclusion, improved classroom dynamics, and more predictable support for students and families.

This groundwork positioned the school well for the successful onboarding of a Director of Student Support in January. Engagement with SEPAC has increased, and notably, Special Education-related concerns have not surfaced at the Board level this year.

Next Steps

- Support the Director of Student Support in fully assuming leadership of inclusive practices, coaching, and family partnership
- Continue professional learning focused on inclusive practice, UDL, and co-teaching
- Share an overview of MTSS and SEB systems with the Board in March, including early indicators of impact
- Use Tier 1 and Tier 2 data to inform longer-range planning

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

Progress to Date

An SEL curriculum is now implemented in grades 5–8, and alignment between SEL, Tier 1 behavior expectations, and MTSS processes has strengthened.

Student climate data reflects strong belonging and connection to trusted adults. With many initiatives already in motion, the focus this year has been on helping staff work confidently within existing systems rather than adding new layers.

Next Steps

- Continue refining Tier 1 and Tier 2 expectations and practices
- Use climate and MTSS data to guide adult support
- Prepare for more visible restorative practices as capacity grows

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

Progress to Date

Equity continues to inform decisions related to inclusive practices, student support systems, and grade realignment. Student voice has expanded through SEL structures, the Civics Action Initiative, and a Peer Leaders extracurricular program.

Longer-term exploratory work is underway related to participation in the National School Lunch Program and expanded before-school care, reflecting an understanding that access, food security, and predictable routines shape belonging and engagement.

Next Steps

- Make clearer connections between student experience data, leadership decisions, and equity commitments
- Continue expanding student voice and civic engagement
- Continue exploratory partnership conversations
- Prepare for longer-term equity-focused curriculum review

Looking Ahead

The first half of this year reflects a school engaged in ambitious, values-aligned work within a deeply caring and committed community. We are building, refining, and learning at the same time.

The central leadership task moving forward is supporting steadiness and long-term sustainability.

With student support leadership now in place, I am intentionally shifting time and attention back toward classroom presence, staff connection, and instructional leadership. The second half of the year will prioritize clarity, coherence, and deepening the work already underway, while supporting the people who make Hilltown what it is.

I am grateful for the Board's partnership and for the collective belief in what this community is building.



HCCPS Hiring Policy Proposal

It is the policy of Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) to hire without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, age, disability, or any other legally protected status. Hiring processes reflect the many perspectives within the school community. Decisions regarding hiring are made by a hiring committee as defined in more complete hiring procedures to follow. For positions that are less than half-time (0.5 FTE), long-term substitutes or other positions that do not require a hiring committee, decisions are made by the Supervising Director and/or Head of School.

All current, regular employees of HCCPS are considered internal candidates providing they meet minimum qualifications for open positions. As such, they will automatically be interviewed. Long-Term Substitutes who work a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of a full year position will also be considered internal candidates.

Professional references and public-facing media will be checked prior to an offer of employment. Offers of employment are contingent on a satisfactory background check, including a CORI check for all employees and a fingerprint record for all regular (non-substitute) employees.

I. Hiring Procedure for Internal Candidates for Teachers and Coordinators

When a vacancy for a teacher or coordinator position occurs, all staff will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to express interest in the position. This may happen in conjunction with an external posting at the discretion of Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School

- For current teachers interested in moving into an open teaching position, this constitutes a request to change their teaching assignment. The Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School will meet with interested teacher(s) and may make this decision without forming a hiring committee. If there is more than one internal candidate interested in the open position, the Supervising Director(s) and

and/or Head of School may choose to form a hiring committee and follow the procedures below or may choose the candidate that is deemed most suited for the position.

- For other qualified internal staff applying for teacher or coordinator positions—including teaching assistants and long-term substitutes - The Supervising Director(s) and/or the Head of School will conduct an initial review and interview. If internal applications are submitted after external candidates have progressed, the hiring process for external candidates may continue concurrently. Following this initial review, an offer of advancement to the finalist round will be determined by the hiring committee. The hiring committee may, at its discretion, waive certain steps (e.g., skills assessment, staff team building exercise,)) for internal candidates based on their experience at Hilltown.

The Committee will decide on one of the options listed below. Decisions are based on consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School makes final decisions regarding next steps.

- Offer the staff member the position
- Continue with the external search process and provide the staff member the option to continue as a candidate
- Not offer the staff member the position

II. Hiring Procedures for Teachers and Coordinators

The procedures outlined below apply to the hiring of teachers and coordinators in half-time or over positions. Positions that do not fall under one of these categories are hired at the discretion of the Head of School. The Board of Trustees manages hiring of the Head of School that they supervise under separate procedures.

Hiring procedures for teachers and coordinators follow these steps:

1.
 - a. **Post the Job:** The Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School will finalize the job description and post the position internally and/or externally. The posting includes a short description of HCCPS, minimum and preferred position qualifications, salary range, and primary position responsibilities. Interim positions must be clearly identified at this step.
 - b. **Form the Hiring Committee:** The Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School will chair and choose members of a hiring committee, considering

prior experience and expertise, with a preference for those who have not recently served on a hiring committee. The hiring committee is composed of:

- Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School
- Board of Trustees representative (responsible for compliance with hiring procedures)
- Staff representative(s)
- Parent/caregiver representative(s), who serves as an active member of the hiring committee, brings the perspective of Hilltown caregivers into committee deliberations and decision-making, and is responsible for soliciting caregiver questions for candidate interviews.

- c. **Conduct a Hiring Committee Orientation:** The Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School conducts an orientation with committee members, this may be done in-person, virtually or asynchronously. Prior to the orientation, committee members are responsible for reviewing anti-bias hiring materials.
2. **Review Applicant Materials and Select Initial Interview Candidates:**
3. Hiring committee members review all applicant materials and provide input about which candidates should be selected for an initial interview.
4. **Conduct Initial Interviews:** The hiring committee or designee(s) meets with each selected candidate for an interview based on predetermined interview questions. In addition to questions determined by the hiring committee, questions will be collected from caregivers and staff in advance, with the parent/caregiver representative responsible for soliciting caregiver questions, and the hiring committee selecting questions or themes to be included in the initial interview.
5. **Select Finalists:** Based on initial interviews, the hiring committee selects finalists to complete the remaining steps in the process. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School makes the final decision.
6. **Conduct Skills Assessment, Team Building Exercise, and solicit Community Feedback:** The following finalist hiring procedure components may occur in any order:
 - a. Skills Assessment
 - b. Staff team building exercise and discussion with potential teaching partner(s) if applicable
 - c.
7. **Decide Final Recommendations:** Hiring committee members review feedback, discuss the final candidates, and make hiring recommendations. If no consensus is reached, the Director of Teaching and Learning and/or Head of School makes the final decision regarding making an offer or declaring a failed search.
8. **Check References:** The Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School ensures that at least two (2) professional references and public-facing media are checked before making an offer of employment.

9. **Make Employment Offer(s):** The Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School makes an employment offer beginning with the first-choice candidate. If no recommended candidate accepts an offer, the hiring procedures start again from the beginning.
10. **Communicate Outcomes:** The Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School announces new hires to the Hilltown community. At the next Board of Trustees meeting, the BoT representative on the hiring committee confirms that the hiring procedures were followed with fidelity.

Emergency Hiring Procedures

The Supervising Director(s) and Learning and/or Head of School may choose to use the emergency hiring procedures in one of the following scenarios:

1. Anytime a position is vacated unexpectedly anytime the school year. A long-term substitute may be hired immediately while the hiring process is utilized.
2. If a position that is on the teacher salary scale becomes open for the upcoming school year fewer than twenty (20) school days before the conclusion of the current school year.

In the case that Emergency Hiring Procedures may be utilized:

- The position must be posted as an interim position.
- The Supervising Director(s) and/or Head of School will decide the necessary and relevant steps in the standard hiring procedures to streamline the process.
- An emergency hiring process and a standard hiring process may differ in some or all of the following ways:
 - Parental and/or board member involvement on the hiring committee is not required.
 - The hiring committee may be smaller than that of a standard hiring process.
 - The timeline for accepting resumes and conducting interviews may be shorter.
 - Skills assessment, team building exercise, staff feedback, and/or parent feedback may be skipped.

III. Hiring procedures for Directors follow these steps:

1. **Post the Job:** The Head of School will finalize the job description and post the position internally and/or externally. The posting includes a short description of HCCPS, minimum and preferred position qualifications, salary range, and primary position responsibilities. Interim positions must be clearly identified at this step.
2. **Form the Hiring Committee:** The Head of School will chair and choose members of a hiring committee, considering prior experience and expertise, with a preference for those who have not recently served on a hiring committee. The hiring committee is composed of:

- i. Head of School
 - ii. Director(s)
 - iii. Board of Trustees representative(s) (responsible for compliance with hiring procedures)
 - iv. Staff representative(s)
 - v. Parent/caregiver representative
3. **Conduct a Hiring Committee Orientation:** The Head of School and Director(s) conduct an orientation with committee members (this may be done in-person, virtually or asynchronously. Prior to the orientation, committee members are responsible for reviewing anti-bias hiring materials)
4. **Review Applicant Materials and Select Initial Interview Candidates:** Hiring committee members review all applicant materials and provide input about which candidates should be selected for an initial interview.
5. **Conduct Initial Interviews:** The hiring committee or designee(s) meets with each selected candidate for an interview based on predetermined interview questions. In addition to questions determined by the hiring committee, questions will be collected from caregivers and staff in advance and the hiring committee.
6. **Select Finalists:** Based on initial interviews, the hiring committee selects finalists to complete the remaining steps in the process. In the event consensus cannot be reached, The Head of School (in consultation with the Directors) makes the final decision to forward candidates to the finalist round.
7. **Conduct Skills Assessment, Team Building Exercise, and solicit Community Feedback:** The following finalist hiring procedure components may occur in any order:
 - a. Skills Assessment/Leadership task(s) presentation to staff
 - b. Skills Assessment/Leadership task(s) presentation to caregivers
 - c. Staff team building exercise and follow up discussion with HoS and Directors
8. **Decide Final Recommendations:** Hiring committee members review various stakeholder feedback, discuss the final candidates, and make hiring recommendations. If no consensus is reached, the Head of School (in consultation with the Director(s)) makes the final decision regarding making an offer or declaring a failed search.
9. **Check References:** Head of School ensures that at least two (2) professional references and public-facing media are checked before making an offer of employment.
10. **Make Employment Offer(s):** The Head of School makes an employment offer beginning with the first-choice candidate. If no recommended candidate accepts an offer, the hiring procedures start again from the beginning.
11. **Communicate Outcomes:** The Head of School announces new hires to the Hilltown community. At the next Board of Trustees meeting, the BoT representative on the hiring committee confirms that the hiring procedures were followed with fidelity.



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Personnel Committee Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: 2/9/25

Priority level:

Approximate time needed for discussion:

Proposal to be presented by:

Text of Proposal: In certain situations, Teaching Assistants are asked to take over for the lead teacher in the classroom. This proposal outlines several scenarios and the compensation for each circumstance.

A: Teacher Substitutes

Scenario 1: TA is Lead Teacher Substitute for 1-3 Days

Sub plans are provided. TAs are compensated for extra minutes worked, including 15 minutes of set up time at the beginning of the day, and time associated with completing student dismissal and classroom clean up at the end of the day. This time is recorded on their timesheets.

Scenario 2: TA is Acting as Lead Teacher during a known, limited-time leave for up to 10 days

After 3 days, a TA will be compensated at their hourly rate for 8 hours per day, 40 hours per week, and relieved of Kids' Club duties during the known leave in order to compensate for extra prep and planning time, and lesson planning supported directly by the Director of Teaching and Learning or the Director of Student Support.

Scenario 3: TA is Acting Lead Teacher for more than 10 days

After 10 days, TA is treated as a Long Term Substitute with full teaching responsibilities (e.g lesson plans, conferences, meetings, report writing) until a replacement teacher is found. If the TA is unwilling/unable to take on this teaching role, an internal TA search/shuffling may occur.

B: Admin Staff Long Term Substitutes

The substitute for any administrative assistant position will be compensated using the administrative assistant salary scale, commensurate with level of experience, but not to exceed the salary of the permanent (absent) staff member.

A Long Term Substitute is any employee who is hired to substitute for an absent staff member for more than 10 days and up to a full school year. Prorated sick time benefits are available but no other additional benefits are provided with the exception of a long term substitute who works a full academic year. In this case, the long term substitute will be eligible for full staff



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

benefits for the length of the contract year. If an existing, benefited employee becomes a long term substitute they retain any benefit time already accrued and health insurance is still available to them. There is no guarantee of ongoing employment for long term substitutes.

For teacher substitutes, the pay rate is the regular substitute pay rate for the first 10 consecutive days. From day 11 on, pay is determined by appropriate placement on the teachers' salary scale, not to exceed step 6 of the appropriate scale. When it is known in advance that the absence will be longer than 10 days, the substitute will be paid at the higher rate from the beginning.

For non-teacher substitutes, pay rates will be negotiated based on position. In no case will the rate be higher than the rate of the permanent (absent) staff in that position.

Given the range of situations that can generate the immediate need for a long-term substitute, The Head of School and/or Directors will utilize emergency hiring procedures in accordance with the HCCPS Hiring Policy.

Goals to be achieved by proposal:

- 1) Clarifying when TA's receive extra compensation for taking on a lead teacher role and assigning dollar amounts to specific scenarios
- 2) Compensating TA's fairly for lead teacher equivalent work

Potential problems/dissenting views:

Budget impact



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

1 Industrial Parkway
Easthampton, MA 01027

Phone: 413-529-7178
Fax: 413-527-1530

website: www.hilltowncharter.org
e-mail: info@hilltowncharter.org



Head of School Performance Evaluation SY25-26 Midyear Feedback Summary from BOT President

Head of School: Chris Kusek

BOT President: Lily Newman

Dates: September 2025-January 2026

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

Summary: Overall this year has been a success, with implementation of multiple elements of the Long Range Plan and a foundation set to build on over the years to come. There are many things to celebrate, and Chris continues to have a positive presence and to build trust in the community. The staff survey reflects some of these highlights:

- 100% agree that HCCPS is a safe place to work and learn with 70% strongly agreeing.
- 95% agree that HCCPS is heading in the right direction.
- 85% agree with 30% strongly agreeing that leaders provide effective support.
- 100% agree that adults and students have positive relationships.

As noted in Chris's reflection, this fall brought unexpected changes that demanded his attention. While essential, this delayed implementation of key pieces of this goal that would have supported the changes underway. This and the overall pace of change, planned or otherwise, are reflected in some of the staff feedback with concerns around sustainability and change, consistent support and communication.

- While 70% of staff saw communication as a positive, about 30% disagreed that leaders effectively communicate information to teachers.
- While more than 50% plan to return next year, several are unsure.
- Nearly 50% noted their biggest challenge is implementing the changes in the program. Several cite job sustainability as a factor in their considerations for continued employment.

Chris identified several strategies for the spring to address these challenges: connecting with all staff and communicating the value of their work; providing consistent support to direct reports; collaborating with staff to clarify and limit the scope of work ahead; and investing them in shared, focused goals for the remainder of the year and going forward. This will support the team to have a sense of stability and deepen implementation of the great work underway.

Goal 2: Strengthen Inclusive Special Education and Student Services

Summary: Chris focused energy on this essential area of work at Hilltown, and took the reins when the Academic Support Coordinator unexpectedly resigned in the fall. He fully and effectively managed this and there have been no concerns that rise to the BOT level this year.

This goal has continued to advance and remained on track despite the staff disruptions. As Chris noted, increased systematization and the hiring and onboarding of the Director of Student Support sets the



foundation for the next steps Chris identified, including tracking the efficacy of interventions and refining supports so all learners can thrive in an inclusive setting.

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

Summary: Foundational systems for restorative practices, SEL, and tiered behavior supports are in place, though implementation has been inconsistent due to capacity constraints. The addition of the Director of Student Support creates the conditions for consistent and effective implementation. These foundations are reflected in positive survey responses around student and schoolwide culture

- 100% of staff report positive relationships with students
- More than 85% of students report they feel their voice is valued in class and they have an important role to play in the learning environment

At the same time, data points to areas for deeper focus. Student survey data is incomplete (missing Purple team responses), but approximately **50%** of respondents reported not always feeling treated fairly in class. This highlights the importance of nuanced classroom practices that can be addressed through coaching, observation, and feedback supported by the DSS role. This role also allows the DOTL to focus more intensively on instructional support, advancing the goal of an equitable and engaging learning experience for all students.

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

Summary: Several positive survey indicators reflect that JEDI lives in much of the fabric of the school.

- 97% of students report positive representation in classes and curriculum
- 100% positive response from staff about collegial relationships that value each others' identities and include open dialog
- 85% agree or strongly agree that leaders help staff incorporate JEDI into the curriculum

Moving forward, not only has Chris outlined concrete next steps that include equitable access to the Hilltown program, but we will work together as a Board with our Equity Team representative to deepen and improve our collective JEDI work and ensure it has clear direction, aligned support and accountability for outcomes.

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

	Jul - Dec 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Ordinary Income/Expense				
Income				
State Sources				
Per-Pupil Revenue	2,017,997	3,929,076	-1,911,079	51%
Total State Sources	2,017,997	3,929,076	-1,911,079	51%
Federal Grants-DESE Administer				
SPED 262 Early Childhood		797	-797	
SPED 240		45,795	-45,795	
Teacher Quality 140		3,514	-3,514	
Title I 305		22,628	-22,628	
Title IV 309		10,000	-10,000	
Total Federal Grants-DESE Administer		82,734	-82,734	
Private Grants				
Country Song & Dance Society	450			
Total Private Grants	450			
Fundraising Income				
Field Trip Fund	3,395	4,500	-1,105	75%
Winter Fair	8,401	7,000	1,401	120%
Total Fundraising Income	11,796	11,500	296	103%
Other sources				
Earnings on Investments	9,567	12,000	-2,433	80%
School Lunch Receipts	8,447	15,000	-6,553	56%
Special Trip Receipts				
Prisms Special Trip Receipts	4,780			
Purples Special Trip Receipts	3,300			
Special Trip Receipts - Other		10,000	-10,000	
Total Special Trip Receipts	8,080	10,000	-1,920	81%
SPED Medicaid reimbursement	2,759	5,000	-2,241	55%
Total Other sources	28,853	42,000	-13,147	69%
Kid's Club Income	41,180	68,500	-27,320	60%
Student Activity Fees	22,225	22,000	225	101%
Miscellaneous Income	2,917	3,000	-83	97%
Total Income	2,125,419	4,158,810	-2,033,391	51%
Gross Profit	2,125,419	4,158,810	-2,033,391	51%
Expense				
Personnel Costs				
Personnel				
Professional Educational Staff	667,598	1,788,265	-1,120,667	37%
Paraprofessional Educ. Staff	173,945	440,651	-266,706	39%
Administrative Staff	200,315	396,519	-196,204	51%
Directors	127,373	236,550	-109,177	54%
Kids' Club Staff	23,266	58,362	-35,096	40%
Stipends - Student Activities	6,835	18,000	-11,165	38%
Stipends - Program	12,943	40,000	-27,057	32%
Longevity Pay		20,540	-20,540	
Total Personnel	1,212,275	2,998,887	-1,786,612	40%

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

	Jul - Dec 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Payroll Taxes				
FICA	26,254	51,936	-25,682	51%
Medicare	17,458	43,484	-26,026	40%
PFML Tax	5,213	10,000	-4,787	52%
SUTA	2,484	8,997	-6,513	28%
UHIC	833	2,713	-1,880	31%
Total Payroll Taxes	52,241	117,130	-64,889	45%
Fringe Benefits				
College Credit Reimbursement		3,000	-3,000	
HRA Benefit	43,560	60,000	-16,440	73%
Health Diversion	27,552	20,000	7,552	138%
Health insurance	151,318	345,000	-193,682	44%
Worker's Compensation Insurance	12,522	16,199	-3,677	77%
Total Fringe Benefits	234,952	444,199	-209,247	53%
Total Personnel Costs	1,499,468	3,560,216	-2,060,748	42%
Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed				
Administrative Consultant	1,913	5,000	-3,088	38%
Admin Services/Data Managemnt	17,557	7,000	10,557	251%
Annual Audit	16,500	17,000	-500	97%
FSA/HRA Service	1,183	2,678	-1,495	44%
Payroll Service	2,256	4,350	-2,094	52%
SPED Contractors	22,753	25,000	-2,247	91%
SPED Summer Services	1,302	5,000	-3,698	26%
Total Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed	63,464	66,028	-2,564	96%
Consultant & Other Svcs				
Curriculum Consultants		6,000	-6,000	
Legal Fees	3,288	10,000	-6,712	33%
Staff Development	26,515	15,000	11,515	177%
Total Consultant & Other Svcs	29,803	31,000	-1,197	96%
Occupancy				
Cleaning Services	19,070	57,373	-38,303	33%
Copier Rental	2,921	6,180	-3,259	47%
Electricity	14,316	26,780	-12,464	53%
Elevator Maintenance	4,771	5,150	-379	93%
Fire/Sprinkler Alarm services	1,216	3,090	-1,874	39%
Heat	3,861	10,300	-6,439	37%
HVAC Maintenance	8,192	10,300	-2,108	80%
Insurance-Liability/Propty/Auto	43,964	41,182	2,782	107%
Interest Expense - USDA Loan	41,988	83,544	-41,556	50%
Internet	1,100	4,635	-3,535	24%
Landscaping	1,650	8,240	-6,590	20%
Minor Repair/Maintenance	13,161	30,900	-17,739	43%
Plowing/Snow Removal	4,055	8,755	-4,700	46%
Telephone	464	1,236	-772	38%
Trash Removal/Recycling	4,051	6,885	-2,834	59%
Water/Sewer	1,005	3,605	-2,600	28%
Total Occupancy	165,786	308,155	-142,369	54%
Supplies				
Educational Supplies/Textbooks				
*Atelier supplies	1,606	2,500	-894	64%
*Blues Ed Supps	211	540	-329	39%
*Greens Ed Supps	551	660	-109	83%
*Yellows Ed Supps	672	660	12	102%
*Oranges Ed Supps	389	630	-241	62%
*Reds Ed Supps	311	630	-319	49%

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

	Jul - Dec 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
*Purples Ed Supps				
Purples - ELA/HUM	744	800	-56	93%
Purples Math	70	800	-730	9%
Purples - Science	654	800	-146	82%
Total *Purples Ed Supps	1,467	2,400	-933	61%
*Prisms Ed Supps				
*Prisms ELA/HUM	343	787	-444	44%
*Prisms Math	76	786	-710	10%
*Prisms Science	288	787	-499	37%
Total *Prisms Ed Supps	706	2,360	-1,654	30%
Drama Supplies	390	1,500	-1,110	26%
Learning Lab Supplies	268	300	-32	89%
Math Specialist Supplies	121	300	-179	40%
*Minicourses	43	400	-357	11%
*Music/movement supplies				
*Music Supplies - K-4	163	397	-234	41%
*Music Supplies - 5-8	394	478	-85	82%
Total *Music/movement supplies	556	875	-319	64%
*Physical Education Supplies	161	875	-714	18%
Spanish Supplies	76	300	-224	25%
*SPED Ed Supps	1,285	3,000	-1,715	43%
*Reading Specialist Supplies	138	300	-162	46%
*Other Ed Supplies/Textbooks**	25,705	27,770	-2,065	93%
Educational Supplies/Textbooks - Other				
Total Educational Supplies/Textbooks	34,657	46,000	-11,343	75%
Food and Supplies	175	1,030	-855	17%
Health & Safety Supplies	1,595	3,708	-2,113	43%
Household Supplies	3,849	5,923	-2,074	65%
Office Supplies	2,353	4,893	-2,540	48%
Playground Supplies	128	1,030	-902	12%
Postage	245	514	-269	48%
Printing and Reproduction		515	-515	
Testing & Evaluation Supplies	5,008	6,963	-1,955	72%
Total Supplies	48,011	70,576	-22,565	68%
Equipment				
Chromebook Replacement	7,038	8,000	-962	88%
Furnishings/Rugs	5,266	1,500	3,766	351%
Minor Equipment	1,925	1,500	425	128%
SPED Equipment	1,638	3,000	-1,362	55%
Tech Repair/Replacement	10,765	10,000	765	108%
Total Equipment	26,632	24,000	2,632	111%
Other expenses				
Advertising		3,000	-3,000	
BOT Discretionary Fund		500	-500	
Community Domain Expense	1,542	3,750	-2,209	41%
Community Service Projects	100	500	-400	20%
Graduation Expenses		1,800	-1,800	
Field trips				
Blues Field Trips	227	555	-328	41%
Greens Field Trips		675	-675	
Yellows Field Trips		675	-675	
Oranges Field Trips	23	675	-652	3%
Reds Field Trips	23	675	-652	3%
Field trips - Other		1,245	-1,245	
Total Field trips	272	4,500	-4,228	6%

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

	Jul - Dec 25	Budget	\$ Over Budget	% of Budget
Fundraising Expenses	1,525	1,500	25	102%
Kid's Club Food/Supplies	211	1,500	-1,289	14%
MCSA Dues	12,045	11,785	260	102%
Miscellaneous Expenses	2,965	7,000	-4,035	42%
School Lunch Expense	12,815	20,000	-7,185	64%
SPED Contingency		25,000	-25,000	
Special Trip Expenses				
Prisms Special Trip Expense	5,712			
Purples Special Trip Expenses	3,894			
Special Trip Expenses - Other		10,000	-10,000	
Total Special Trip Expenses	9,606	10,000	-394	96%
Sunshine/Staff Appreciations	35	1,000	-965	4%
Student Activity Expenses	1,619	5,000	-3,381	32%
Total Other expenses	42,735	96,835	-54,100	44%
Directors' Discretionary Fund		2,000	-2,000	
Total Expense	1,875,898	4,158,810	-2,282,912	45%
Net Ordinary Income	249,521		249,521	100%
Other Income/Expense				
Other Income				
Other Income - Non Operating				
Capital Project Donations	10,000			
Total Other Income - Non Operating	10,000			
Total Other Income	10,000			
Other Expense				
Depreciation Expenses	55,439			
Total Other Expense	55,439			
Net Other Income	-45,439			
Net Income	204,082		204,082	100%

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School
Balance Sheet
As of December 31, 2025

	<u>Dec 31, 25</u>	<u>Sep 30, 25</u>	<u>Dec 31, 24</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
Easthampton Savings			
ESB-General Reserve x0819	235,811	233,690	225,910
ESB Checking - XXXXX4269	442,915	456,483	513,665
ESB-Capital Reserve x1886	195,914	193,890	260,359
Total Easthampton Savings	<u>874,639</u>	<u>884,063</u>	<u>999,934</u>
Total Checking/Savings	874,639	884,063	999,934
Other Current Assets			
Paycheck corrections	850	850	0
Suspense	0	30	0
Due from employees	-149	0	0
Prepaid Expenses	1,998	1,998	0
Security Deposit	4,531	7,279	4,831
Total Other Current Assets	<u>7,230</u>	<u>10,157</u>	<u>4,831</u>
Total Current Assets	881,869	894,219	1,004,765
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	-727,209	-707,872	-649,860
Property Improvements	456,358	456,358	288,137
Accum. Dep - Property Imprvmnts	-195,788	-187,705	-166,104
Property and Equipment			
Classroom Equip./Furnishings	34,508	34,508	34,508
Accumulated Depreciation - F&E	-33,311	-33,012	-31,713
Total Property and Equipment	<u>1,197</u>	<u>1,497</u>	<u>2,795</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>3,325,284</u>	<u>3,353,004</u>	<u>3,265,695</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>4,207,153</u></u>	<u><u>4,247,223</u></u>	<u><u>4,270,460</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable			
Accounts Payable	46,365	41,569	52,654
Total Accounts Payable	<u>46,365</u>	<u>41,569</u>	<u>52,654</u>
Credit Cards			
American Express	5,276	12,549	1,019
Total Credit Cards	<u>5,276</u>	<u>12,549</u>	<u>1,019</u>
Other Current Liabilities			
Deferred Revenue - Grants	316	492	742

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School

Balance Sheet

As of December 31, 2025

	<u>Dec 31, 25</u>	<u>Sep 30, 25</u>	<u>Dec 31, 24</u>
Payroll Liabilities			
Dental Plan Payable	-416	-507	-395
Employee Health	-3,930	-5,658	-5,669
Employee Life	229	229	226
MA Retirement	1,509	1,509	0
Sect 125 - FSA	-5,346	-5,333	-4,443
SUTA	0	0	0
Payroll Liabilities - Other	1	0	0
Total Payroll Liabilities	<u>-7,954</u>	<u>-9,760</u>	<u>-10,280</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>-7,638</u>	<u>-9,269</u>	<u>-9,539</u>
Total Current Liabilities	44,004	44,848	44,134
Long Term Liabilities			
Note Payable - USDA	3,035,408	3,051,103	3,097,548
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>3,035,408</u>	<u>3,051,103</u>	<u>3,097,548</u>
Total Liabilities	3,079,411	3,095,952	3,141,682
Equity			
General Reserve Account	233,690	233,690	225,910
Res'd for Capital Expenditures	193,890	193,890	260,359
Contingency Fund	50,000	50,000	50,000
Investments in Fixed Assets	266,997	266,997	94,571
Undesignated Fund Balance	179,084	179,084	197,029
Net Income	204,082	227,611	300,908
Total Equity	<u>1,127,742</u>	<u>1,151,272</u>	<u>1,128,777</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>4,207,153</u>	<u>4,247,223</u>	<u>4,270,460</u>

HCCPS FISCAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

HCCPS INTERNAL CONTROL POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The HCCPS Board of Trustees and all levels of management are responsible for preventing and detecting instances of fraud and related misconduct and for establishing and maintaining proper internal controls that provide security and accountability of the resources of the school. Management is also responsible to recognize risks and exposures inherent to their area of responsibility, and be aware of indications of fraud or related misconduct.

Any employee with reasonable basis for believing fraudulent or related misconduct has occurred should report such incidents to the Head of School, the Finance Manager, the treasurer or president of the Board of Trustees or the Office of the Inspector General as stated in M.G.L Chapter 12A, §14 'Complaints by public employees; investigation'

Internal control policies provide HCCPS with the foundation to properly safeguard its assets, implement management's internal policies, provide compliance with state and federal laws and regulations and produce timely and accurate financial information.

1. Compliance With Laws

The Hilltown Cooperative Public Charter School (HCCPS) will follow all the relevant laws and regulations that govern Charter Schools within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Additionally, U.S. Government laws and regulations that relate to grant funding will be adopted as the grant funding is received. The following are specific policies of the Charter School:

A. Political Contributions

No funds or assets of the HCCPS may be contributed to any political party or organization or to any individual who either holds public office or is a candidate for public office. The direct or indirect use of any funds or other assets of the Charter School for political contributions in any form, whether in cash or other property, services, or the use of facilities, is strictly prohibited. The Charter School also cannot be involved with any committee or other organization that raises funds for political purposes.

HCCPS may advocate for education/charter school issues before the legislature/congress. HCCPS may not advocate on behalf of political candidates.

Following are examples of prohibited activities:

1. Contributions by an employee that are reimbursed through expense accounts or in other ways.
2. Purchase by the organization of tickets for political fundraising events.
3. Contributions in-kind, such as lending employees to political parties or using the school assets in political campaigns.

B. Record Keeping

To provide an accurate and auditable record of all financial transactions, the HCCPS's books, records, and accounts are maintained in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles as required by the Commonwealth's statutes, applicable to Charter Schools.

Further, the HCCPS specifically requires that:

1. No funds or accounts may be established or maintained for purposes that are not fully and accurately described within the books and records of the school.
2. Receipts and disbursements must be fully and accurately described in the books and records.
3. No false entries may be made on the books or records or any false or misleading reports issued.
4. Payments may be made only to the contracting party and only for the actual services rendered or products delivered. No false or fictitious invoices may be paid.

2. *Organizational Conflict Of Interest Or Self-Dealing (Related Parties)*

HCCPS may not be operated for the benefit of an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or an individual in his or her own private capacity or individuals related to the Charter School or members of its management, unless the private benefit is considered merely incidental. The HCCPS will follow M.G.L. Chapter 268A and M.G.L. Chapter 71, §89(v) conflict of interest laws and disclosures which restrict public officials and employees from taking advantage of their position to gain improper benefits for themselves, relatives, their associates, or their friends. The law also restricts board members from making decisions on matters affecting their financial interest and limits the circumstances under which they can receive anything of value because of their official position. A board member may not participate in any decision or discussion if one of the following groups will receive financial benefit:

- A. The Trustee, his/her immediate family, or his/her business partner;
- B. A business organization in which the Trustee is serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner or employee; or

C. Any person or organization with whom the Trustee is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment (M.G.L. Chapter 268a, §6).

The private benefit preclusion will extend to:

- A. Sale or exchange, or leasing, of property between the school and an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- B. Lending of money or other extension of credit between the school and an affiliated organization (excluding component units) or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- C. Furnishing of goods, services or facilities between the school and an affiliated organization (excluding component units) or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- D. Payment of compensation, unless authorized by the Board of Trustees or its governing body, by the school to an affiliated or unaffiliated organization or a private or related individual.
- E. Transfer to, use by, or for the benefit of a private or related individual of the income or assets of the school.

Thus, the HCCPS will be guided by the principle of arms-length standards with all affiliated or unaffiliated organizations or with a private or related individual(s). Annually, the Board of Trustees will file a financial disclosure form as required by M.G.L. Chapter 71, section 89(v).

Related party transactions shall include transactions between a school and members of the board, management, contracted management organization, employees, related individuals and affiliated companies. Related individuals within the scope of this definition include spouses, parents, children, spouses of children, grandchildren, siblings, father in law, mother in law, sister in law and brother in law of a board member or school employee.

3. Board Of Trustees Authorities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the operation of HCCPS in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c.71§89 and all other state and federal laws and regulations and conditions as the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Secretary of Education may establish from time to time. The Board of Trustees is also responsible for operating the school in accordance with the representations made in its charter school application submitted to and approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Secretary of Education.

Specifically, the Board of Trustees shall have the sole authority to approve and will incorporate into its own minutes such matters as (i) change of the School's name, with the Department of Education's

Charter School office approval (ii) adoption of the annual operating and capital budgets, (iii) selection or termination of key employees (iv) key employees' salary and salary changes, (v) incurrence of debt, mortgages or other encumbrances and their covenants and restrictions, within the terms of the charter (vi) investment policies, (vii) depository and investment banks, (viii) purchase or sale of property (ix) opening up or closing checking or savings accounts, and (x) selection of the HCCPS' certified public accountants and (xi) other activities associated with the operations of HCCPS.

The Board of Trustees will meet regularly to ensure that its fiduciary duty is maintained. The Board will review the following: prior meeting minutes, business items, educational items, subcommittee reports, Coordinators report, new business and other items.

4. *Signature Authorities*

To properly segregate duties within HCCPS, the Treasurer of the Board, the Head of School, and Director(s) designated by the Head of School to be the internal signatory back up are the only individuals with signatory authority and are responsible for authorizing all transactions. Individual checks greater than \$5,000 will require dual signatures prior to check issuance.

5. *Government Access to Records*

The Finance Manager will provide access to the HCCPS records to the Comptroller General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or his designee and provide supporting records, as requested by government auditors to facilitate the completion of such audits or reviews, in a timely manner.

6. *Security of Financial Data*

- A. General and application specific controls of the school's accounting software will be utilized to ensure that unauthorized access to data is precluded.
- B. The system's accounting data must be backed up daily to an external drive by the Finance Manager to ensure the recoverability of financial information in case of hardware failure. In addition the accounting data will be backed up to "the cloud" daily through a subscription to an online data backup service.
- C. All other financial data, unused checks and unclaimed checks will be secured by the Finance Manager from unauthorized access.

7. *Security of School Documents*

Originals of the following corporate documents are maintained and their presence is verified on a periodic basis:

- A. Charter and all related amendments
- B. HCCPS by-laws
- C. Minutes of the Board of Trustees and subcommittees
- D. Banking agreements
- E. Leases
- F. Insurance policies
- G. Vendor invoices
- H. Grant and contract agreements
- I. Contract and grant billings

8. *Use of School Assets*

School employees should not use any of the school's assets for personal use without prior approval of the Head of School and only with proper justification.

9. *Use Of School Credit Cards*

HCCPS recognizes that the most expedient method for purchasing is online, and that a school credit card is necessary to expedite orders. School credit cards should be fully reviewed for maximum benefits and applied for by the current Finance Manager. Cards are only to be used for school related purchases and all charges must be supported by invoices or order requests to be eligible for payment by HCCPS.

Monthly credit card statements are reconciled to invoices and order requests and are approved by the Head of School. Credit card balances are to be paid in full monthly, with no balance being carried over.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The HCCPS is granted a charter by the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under MGL Chapter 71, Section 89. HCCPS is considered a

special purpose government entity that engages in operating a school and all of the financial activity of the school is recorded. As such, the accounting policies and financial reporting adopted by the school should be consistent with a special purpose governmental entity that engages in operating a school. The Board of Trustees has oversight of the management of the HCCPS inclusive of establishing the governance structure and the financial management policies as set forth in the HCCPS application.

10. Basis Of Accounting

The HCCPS will maintain their accounting records and related financial reports on the accrual basis of accounting.

11. Accounting Policies

The accounting policies and financial reporting adopted are consistent with the special purpose governmental entity requirements of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), including Statement of Governmental Accounting Standards No. 34 – **Basic Financial Statements – and Management’s Discussion and Analysis – for State and Local Governments**. GASB is the recognized standard setting body for establishing governmental accounting and financial reporting principles. Pursuant to GASB Statement No. 20, **Accounting and Financial Reporting for Proprietary Funds and Other Governmental Entities That Use Proprietary Fund Accounting**, the school has elected to apply the provisions of all relevant pronouncements of Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) that do not conflict with or contradict GASB pronouncements.

12. Basis of Presentation

The accounts of the HCCPS are organized as a special purpose governmental entity that engages in education, which is considered to be a separate accounting entity. The operations are accounted for by providing a separate set of self-balancing accounts, which comprise its assets, liabilities, net assets, revenues and expenditures.

All non profit agencies associated with the HCCPS should be evaluated during the planning stage of the audit to determine if they should be included as a component unit of the school. If they are considered a component unit then all of their financial information should be reported in conjunction with the HCCPS's financial statements and accounted for in accordance with **GASB No.’s 14 and 39**.

If they do not meet the criteria of a component unit, then all the transactions incurred between the non-profit and the School should be evaluated as related party transactions and disclosed in accordance with GAAP and the **Guide**. DOE requires that all related party transactions, whether material or immaterial be disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

13. Revenues

Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned.

14. Expenditures

Under the accrual basis of accounting, expenses are recognized when services are incurred or goods are received.

15. In-Kind Expenses

The school recognizes goods and services that are donated, valued at over \$1,000, or would materially affect budgeted operations. These expenses are recorded when incurred and offset by in kind revenue.

16. Incurred Costs

For the purpose of invoicing funding sources for allowable costs under cost reimbursement grants or contracts, the term "costs incurred" is defined as follows:

Costs related to items or services incurred directly for the grant or contract and received at the time of the request for reimbursement and are not specifically disallowed by the funding source.

17. Cash Management

A. The school maintains cash accounts at the following banks:

- 1. Interest bearing accounts- Easthampton Savings
- 2. Operating – Easthampton Savings

B. The Finance Manager will review accounts quarterly to determine if grants need to be drawn down from GEM\$, the Massachusetts DESE grant management software. If expenditures warrant and grant availability allows, the Finance Manager will draw the appropriate funds.

C. Detailed Cash Management practices can be found in Appendix B

18. Vendor Accounts

Finance Manager is required to authenticate all requested changes to vendor/supplier or client/customer information (such as changes to bank accounts, routing numbers, contact information) with a phone call to an authorized representative of the vendor/supplier or client/customer at a pre-determined phone number on file to protect the interests of HCCPS.

Accounts Receivable Aging Criteria

Accounts receivable outstanding are aged on a thirty, sixty, ninety, and over-ninety day basis.

19. Grant/Contract Invoicing

- A. All invoices are submitted to the funding sources by dates specified in the grant or contract agreement.
- B. The invoicing format is that specified by the funding source.

20. Investments

The HCCPS shall follow M.G.L. Chapter 44 **Municipal Finance** in regards to purchasing investments.

21. Budgets

- A. The HCCPS prepares an annual operating budget of revenues and expenses, and a capital budget. These budgets are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees prior to the start of the new fiscal year and modified, as necessary. Cash flow projections will be conducted and reviewed as needed.
- B. Financial statements displaying budget vs. actual results are prepared by the Finance Manager and reviewed by the Finance Committee for presentation to the Board of Trustees quarterly.

22.. Insurance and Bonding

- A. The school maintains minimum levels of coverage, as deemed appropriate by the Board of Trustees, for the following policies:
 - 1. General liability
 - 2. Business & personal property (including auto/bus)
 - 3. Cyber Security
 - 4. Workers' compensation
 - 5. Personal injury liability
 - 6. Unemployment
- B. The school requires proof of adequate insurance coverage from all prospective contractors, as deemed applicable by the Board of Trustees.

23. Massachusetts Teacher Retirement System

The Massachusetts Teacher Retirement System is a contributory retirement system designed to provide benefits to Massachusetts teachers and administrators per MGL Chapter 32. Teachers employed by the school at least .5fte are eligible for membership and are required to join the system.

24. Record Retention And Disposal

A. Records are maintained for the following minimum periods:

1. Books, records, documents and other supporting evidence including paid, cancelled or voided checks, accounts payable records, vendors' invoices, payroll sheets and registers of salaries and wages, tax withholding statements, employees' timesheets and other public documents are retained for seven years after the original entry date.

B. The following records supporting Federal contracts, as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget are retained for the indicated minimum periods:

1. For three years after submission of the final report of expenditures: general ledger, trial balance, accounts payable and accounts receivable ledger, payroll register, check register and checks, invoices. Except for :
 - a) If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.
 - b) Records for real property and equipment acquired with Federal funds shall be retained for 3 years after final disposition.
2. Permanently: Audit reports, annual corporate reports, charter, board minutes, tax and legal correspondence, labor contracts, insurance claims and policies, and retirement and pension records.

C. The disposal date determined under this policy is the end of the fiscal year, or the date of final payment of government grants.

D. All records not supporting government grants or otherwise covered by rules of the Internal Revenue Service are retained for three years from the end of the fiscal year in which the records were originally prepared.

E. All financial records are maintained in chronological order, organized by fiscal year.

25. Financial Reporting

The Finance Manager maintains supporting records in sufficient detail to prepare the School's financial reports, including:

A. Annually:

1. Financial statements for audit
2. Annual budget
3. Charter School End of Year Financial Report

B. Quarterly:

1. Balance sheet and Statement of revenue and expenditures
2. Internally generated budget vs. actual financial statements with explanations for significant variances
3. Billing invoices to funding sources
4. Accounts receivable aging report
5. Accounts payable listing
6. IRS Form 941 and payroll tax returns and comparable state taxing authority returns
7. Other reports upon request

26. Audit

The Board of Trustees contracts annually with a qualified independent certified public accounting firm to conduct an audit of the HCCPS's financial statements in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, **Government Auditing Standards** issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, 2003 Revision (GAS) and if applicable the **U.S Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-133**. The selected audit firm must be familiar with these standards and related Commonwealth of Massachusetts and HCCPS regulations, in order to properly conduct the audit engagement.

27. Audit/Finance Committee

The Board of Trustees appoints the chair of the Finance Committee. This committee will nominate the independent auditor and review the scope and results of the audit. The Finance committee also receives notice of any consequential irregularities and the management letter that the auditor noted during the engagement. Additionally, the subcommittee will develop a corrective action plan to address all relevant weaknesses noted by the

auditor. The Finance subcommittee will also review all financial information of the HCCPS and provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

28. Chart of Accounts

The chart of accounts of the HCCPS are noted in **Appendix A**. The chart of accounts will assist schools in managing their operations, preparing financial statements and also facilitating their preparation of the **End of Year Report** as required by the **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education HCCPS Audit Guide, January 2005**.

POLICIES RELATED TO ASSETS, LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY

ASSETS

29. Bank Accounts

A. Bank accounts for the indicated purpose and limitation(s) will be authorized by the Board of Trustees of the School. Accounts have been opened at the indicated Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)-insured banks:

Name of Bank	Purpose/Limitation of Account
Easthampton Savings	Checking Accounts
Easthampton Savings	6 month CD

30. Petty Cash Payments

A. HCCPS does not maintain a petty cash account.

31. Betterments

Expenditures for significant betterments of existing leased/owned properties are recorded in Leasehold/Building Improvements on the Balance Sheet at cost. Maintenance and repairs are expensed as incurred. Depreciation associated with the betterment will be calculated based on its useful life and straight-line depreciation method. The depreciation expense will be recorded in the Depreciation account.

LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY

32. *Accounts Payable*

Only valid accounts payable transactions based on documented vendor invoices, receiving report, receipts, or other approved documentation are recorded as accounts payable.

33. *Accounts Payable Payment Policy*

Vendors and suppliers are paid as their payment terms require, taking advantage of any discounts offered. If cash flow problems exist, payments are made on a greatest dependency/greatest need basis as determined by the Head of School.

34. *Accrued Liabilities*

Salaries, wages earned, and payroll taxes, together with professional fees, rent, and insurance costs incurred, but unpaid, are reflected as a liability when entitlement to payment occurs.

35. *Liability For Compensated Absences*

A. HCCPS carries no liability for compensated absences. Accrued but unused leave time is not compensated upon termination, voluntary or involuntary.

36. *Debt*

A. When applicable, short-term debt consists of financing expected to be paid within one year of the date of the annual audited financial statements. Long-term debt consists of financing that is not expected to be repaid within one year.

B. All short-term and long-term debt is approved by the Board of Trustees and may not exceed the duration of the charter, without consent of the Board of Education.

C. Loan agreements approved by the Board of Trustees should be in writing and should specify all applicable terms, including the purpose of the loan, the interest rate, and the repayment schedule.

37. Net Assets

Net assets are recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to special purpose governmental units. Net assets include the following:

- Unrestricted
- Restricted
- Investment in Capital Assets, net of related debt

COST ACCOUNTING POLICIES

38. Consistency In Cost Accounting

Practices used by the HCCPS in estimating costs in grant/contract proposals are consistent with its accounting practices used in accumulating and reporting costs. Accounting practices used by the HCCPS in accumulating and reporting actual costs is consistent with its practices used in estimating costs in its grant and contract proposals.

39. Unallowable Costs

Costs expressly unallowable or mutually agreed to be unallowable, are identified in separate general ledger accounts and excluded from billings to a grant or contract with the respective funding source. Including, but not limited to, OMB Circular A-87 - **Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments**, OMB Circular A-102 - **Grant and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments**, OMB Circular A-133 - **Audits of State and Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations**.

40. Separate Records Of Unallowable Costs

The HCCPS maintains separate records of all expressly and mutually agreed upon unallowable costs.

41. Cost Accounting Period

The fiscal year of the HCCPS is July 1st through June 30th. The same accounting period is used for all adjusting entries and accruals.

42. Gain Or Loss On Disposition Of Assets

Gains and losses from the sale or other disposition of property are recorded as revenue or expenses in the year in which they occur, and are reflected

as such on the ***Statement of Revenue, Expenditures and Changes in Net Assets.***

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT POLICIES

43. Property and Equipment

HCCPS maintains records of property and equipment, date of acquisition and purchase prices.

PROCUREMENT POLICIES

44. Procurement of Goods

HCCPS procures only those items and services that are required to perform the mission and/or fill a bona fide need. HCCPS will designate a purchasing agent who must participate in the public purchasing official certification program conducted by the Office of the Inspector General. Procurements are made using best value contracting which includes assessing the best value considering quality, performance and price. MGL, Chapter 30B is not required to be followed by HCCPS, based on DOE Technical Advisory 98-1. However, the school will use a competitive procurement, which requires sound business practices for purchases less than \$10,000. See Appendix D for state approved procurement charts that will be used as a guideline. The school will also select the best value by obtaining three written quotes for items greater than \$10,000 and less than \$150,000. Finally, a bid process will be used for items greater than \$150,000, in which three bids will be received and evaluated using an evaluation process.

A. HCCPS adheres to the following objectives:

1. Procurements will be completely impartial based strictly on the merits of supplier and contractor proposals and applicable related considerations such as delivery, quantity, etc.
2. Make all purchases in the best interests of the school and its funding sources.
3. Obtain quality supplies/services needed for delivery at the time and place required.
4. Buy from responsible sources of supply.
5. Obtain maximum value for all expenditures.
6. Deal fairly and impartially with all vendors.

7. Maintain dependable sources of supply.
 8. Be above suspicion of unethical behavior at all times; avoid any conflict of interest, related parties or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in the HCCPS supplier relationships.
- B. Purchases over \$1,000. or 50% of an approved budget line, whichever is less, shall be approved by the Head of School. The Head of School and the Treasurer of the BOT must approve purchases more than \$10,000.
- C. All lease agreements over \$10,000 total value will be evidenced by a lease or sublease agreement approved by the Board of Trustees and signed by the BOT president or Head of School, depending on the nature of the lease. The agreement will identify all the terms and conditions of the lease. Any real estate agreement to rent or sell will require a beneficial interest disclosure as required in MGL Chapter 7, § 40J.

45. *Emergency Purchases*

Emergency purchases are defined as the purchase of goods or services that are so badly needed that the school will suffer financial or operational damage if they are not secured immediately. A decision to purchase may be declared in an emergency at the school's discretion and 'best value' procurement guidelines must be followed. In addition, the purchase must be authorized by the Head of School.

46. *Procurement – Construction*

HCCPS is required to comply with certain laws while constructing a new facility or performing construction on their current facility. These laws include numerous federal and state laws inclusive of the Commonwealth's public bidding and prevailing wage laws. When undertaking construction or renovation projects the school should seek advice from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Occupational Safety regarding the applicability of these laws and also the advice of legal counsel regarding the specific construction project.

Public Bidding Laws - This law applies to the 'construction, reconstruction, installation, demolition, maintenance or repair of any building by a public agency estimated to cost more than \$25,000' (M.G.L. c. 149, § 44A(2)). HCCPS is considered a public agency under the statutes of the Commonwealth.

Prevailing Wage Statute - This law requires payment of a minimum hourly wage rate for certain classifications of labor performed on state and local construction projects. (M.G.L. c. 149, §§ 26-27D). The Division

of Occupational Safety issues prevailing wages schedules for construction projects covered by the prevailing wage statute and determines whether the prevailing wage statute applies to certain construction projects.

47. Procurement – Educational Services

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Education must approve the terms of the contracts with individuals or organizations that provide ‘substantially all educational services’ (M.G.L. 71, §89(j)(5). These contracts are not valid or in effect prior to receiving final approval from the Board of Education.

TRAVEL POLICIES

48. Employee Mileage Reimbursement

- A. All employees are reimbursed at the standard mileage rate per mile as determined by the Internal Revenue Service at the start of the fiscal year for use of their own vehicle for business related travel. In addition, parking fees and tolls paid are reimbursable if properly supported.
- B. All employees requesting such mileage reimbursement are required to furnish a **Reimbursement Request Form** containing the destination of each trip, its purpose and the miles driven, parking fees and tolls, within one month after the travel date. Each employee is responsible for detailing the travel and related expenses and including the required supporting documentation.
- C. The Head of School approves travel related reimbursement.

CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS

49. Consultant Utilization

The utilization of all consultants and contract personnel are sufficiently evidenced by:

- A. Details of all agreements (e.g., work requirements, rate of compensation, and nature and amount of other expenses, if any) with the individuals or organizations providing the services and details of actual services performed.
- B. Invoices or billings submitted by consultants, including sufficient detail as to the time expended and nature of the actual services performed.

50. *Independent Contractors*

The use of consultants is closely monitored so as not to vary from the rules of the Internal Revenue Code and M.G.L Chapter 193. In particular, consultants will:

- A. The service must be outside HCCPS' usual course of operation.
- B. Must be engaged in an independent trade, occupation, profession or business of the same type.
- C. Not receive any fringe benefits as such, although their fee may include provision for fringe benefits.
- D. Not be assigned a permanent workstation.
- E. Will use his or her own stationery or time sheet in billing for services.

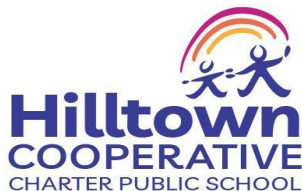
Proposed to the HCCPS Board of Trustees FY2026

[Appendix A](#) : Account Listing

[Appendix B](#) : Cash Management Procedures and Protocols

[Appendix C](#) : Reserve Account Procedures

[Appendix D](#) : Procurement Charts



Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Committee/Individual submitting proposal: Finance Committee

Subject: Transfer of Funds from Checking to Capital Reserves Account

Date: 02/12/2026

Priority level: Medium

Approximate time needed for discussion: 5 minutes

Proposal to be presented by: Chris Kusek/Kylan Mandile

Text of proposal: We propose transferring the FY25 surplus, in its entirety of \$95,000.00, from the undesignated funds balance (held in the checking account) into the designated capital reserves certificate of deposit account. We had transferred \$75,000 from the Capital Reserves account to cover playground expenses in July with Board approval. This dropped the account below the \$200,000 board set minimum amount. We are obligated to bring it above \$200,000 in this fiscal year, either through the operating budget, or through using prior year surplus funds.

Goals to be achieved by proposal: Replenish and increase Capital Reserves Account in anticipation of some major sprinkler replacements and other major capital outlays in the not too distant future.

Potential problems/dissenting views: Funds not being available for other uses

Approved by Board of Trustees Date:

Proposal to the Board of Trustees

From: Kathleen Hulton, Trustee

Date:February 12, 2026

Name of Proposal: Trial Pause of JEDI Committee and Creation of Board Equity Team Liaison Role

Priority Level: Medium

Approximate time needed for discussion: 15 minutes

Proposal to be presented by: Kathleen Hulton

Committee members drafting proposal: Kathleen Hulton

Text of Proposal:

Since its launch in 2020, the Board's JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee has served as a forum to explore equity-related issues and initiatives. While the committee has made valuable contributions, sustaining consistent engagement has been challenging due to limited board capacity and some overlap with the school's staff-led Equity Team. This proposal recommends placing the JEDI Committee on a 6–12 month trial pause and creating a Board Equity Liaison role. The Liaison will serve as the main point of contact, receive updates, and report to the Board quarterly.

Goals to be achieved by proposal:

- Maintain Board oversight of equity work in the school
- Strengthen Board communication and accountability on equity issues in the school
- Align engagement with Board capacity

Potential problems / dissenting views:

- Perception of reduced commitment to equity
- Preference for full committee structure

Additional notes:

Trial parameters include a 6–12 month review period. Reporting will be quarterly with brief written or verbal updates. Next steps include Board approval and appointment of Board Member to be Equity Liaison.



Finance Committee Minutes

Group: Finance Committee	Date and time: Wed., November 19, 2025 9:00 am
Location/Link: https://meet.google.com/ytq-mjoj-rpt	
Online Meeting ID: 883 6498 7634	Online Meeting Password: budget
<p>Agenda: <u>Attendees:</u> Chris Kusek, Carla Clark, Lisa Plaza, Andrew Tilbe, Grace Mrowicki, Kylan Mandile</p> <p><u>Regrets:</u> None</p> <p><u>Minutes:</u> Andrew motions to approve October 22, 2025 meeting minutes, Carla seconds, minutes approved by consensus. ACTION: Kylan to send approved minutes for inclusion in BoT packet</p> <p><u>Fiscal Policy:</u> Chris and Carla attended a seminar on public contracting by the Office of the Inspector General of Massachusetts. They learned about policies and procedures that can be incorporated into our fiscal policy when revise. The school will need to have a MCPPO (Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official) as the state starts to enforce this requirement. Next month, Chris and Carla have a meeting scheduled with a consultant, Carla Oakley, who specializes in operations management and has experience helping other schools form their fiscal policies. They will be discussing codifying financial and operational procedures. The goal will be to have a draft in Q4 of FY2026 and final version by Q1 of FY2027. ACTION: Chris & Carla will meet with the operational consultant and start work on revising the fiscal policy.</p> <p><u>Long Range Capital Plan:</u> The school had previously obtained quotes from several vendors and decided such expense was not cost efficient and money was better spent on maintenance and repairs. ACTION: Kylan to recommend potential capital plan consultants to Chris.</p> <p><u>New Business:</u> None (Potential item: Equity team looking at barriers to school enrollment issues such as pre-care for students and the national meals program.). ACTION: Kylan to email Emily Boddy to add action item of recruiting new member for finance committee.</p> <p><u>Reviewed</u> action items.</p> <p><u>Next meeting:</u> December 17, 2025</p> <p><u>Adjourned:</u> at 9:45am</p>	



GABS Committee Meeting Minutes – Fri, Nov 21, 2025, 8:30 am

Meeting Location: HCCPS

Present: Emily Boddy; Tiffany Ross;, Kathleen Hulton, Lindsay Fogg-Wilits

Guests: Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Chris Kusek

Regrets: Sara Scheiffelin

Notetaker: Emily

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Check-in/ Announcements	Checked in.	
JEDI	Woven into other discussions	
Approve October 20, 2025 Minutes	Approved by Consensus	
Board Handbook Discussion	Went through outline, discussed tasks and ways it can be updated.	Members will review and bring feedback to next meeting. Emily will update clerk tasks re policy management.
Succession Planning- Discussion	Clerk replacements, Emily will follow up with Sarah Jane Emily is going to be in touch with Matt and Sarah about joining the board.	
Goals - Check-in, outline specific responsibilities and tasks	We will review and think through any ways to disseminate tasks to members.	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

New Business	By-Law review, including official staff role on the board and addressing roles of what were the original domain on the board moving forward	Kathleen and Emily will review this bylaw.
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	Meeting dates for the year, 8:30am: TBD	
Adjournment	9:35 am	

Agenda items for next month:

GABS agenda items for next BOT meeting:

Sarah Buttenwieser
46 Franklin Street
Northampton, MA
01060
413.896.0898

Occupation: Freelance Writer

Publications include New York Times, Business Insider, Preview Massachusetts Magazine, Boston Globe, Daily Hampshire Gazette, essays in various anthologies and many others

Community Engagements:

Currently, Board Member of Collective Power for Reproductive Justice

Board Chair, Safe Passage

Member of the Campaign Council for Hampshire College

Previously, Board Member Paintbox Theatre

Hampshire College

Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art (founding member)

Enchanted Circle Theater

The Learning Tree

Cummington Community for the Arts

Previous Committees, Campaign Committee CISA

Campaign Committee Grow Food Northampton

Strategic Planning Committee Treehouse Foundation

Strategic Planning Committee: Sunnyside Early Childhood Center

Fundraising Campaign, Governance Committees Hilltown Cooperative Public Charter School