



HCCPS Board of Trustees

Meeting Agenda

THURSDAY January 15, 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 DRAFT RUBRIC and come prepared to provide feedback on the tool.

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 ● Norms/Agreements ● BOT visibility this month ● Approve minutes from Dec BoT mtg 	Lily Newman	Decision	6:30 pm
Public Comment (5 min)	Lily Newman		6:37
School Leader Updates (20 min) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staffing b. Initiatives and Events c. Key spring dates d. Other 	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion	6:45
Committee Reports/Updates (25 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Personnel</u>: Salary scales update; Hiring policy next steps; TA/Sub policy ● <u>Education</u>: Updates and next steps 	Tala Elia Rebecca Belcher-Timme/Adam Szymkowicz/Lauren	Discussion Decision Discussion	7:05



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>GABS</u>: Annual meeting, recruitment, bylaws, announcements, other 	Ames Emily Boddy		
HOS Draft Rubric (20 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Document review, clarifying questions, probing questions and feedback ● Next steps 	Lily Newman Grace Mrowicki	Discussion	7:30
General Updates & Reminders (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LRP update in Feb/Mar ● Feb BOT mtg - Thursday 2/12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HOS midyear report ● Feb BOT Office Hours ● BOT retreat in May 	Lily Newman	Discussion	7:50
Wrap Up (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action items review ● Next steps/February meeting agenda items ● Snacks and drinks for February ● Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb 	Lily Newman	Decision	8:00
Adjournment	Lily Newman	Decision	8:05



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

December 10, 2025 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, Grace Mrowicki, Tala Elia, Lily Newman, Ben Carlis, Emily Boddy, Kylan Mandile, Lauren Ames, Adam Szymkowicz, Neal Teague, Kathleen Hulton

By Zoom: Andrea Hermans
 Regrets: Steve Sell

Guests: Meghan Carroll
 By Zoom: Lauren Bonn

Facilitator: Lily Newman
 Notetaker: Emily Boddy
 List keeper: Kylan
 Timekeeper: Tala
 Mission statement read by: Kathleen H.
 Norms: Ben

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 September BoT mtg <p>Lily Newman</p>	<p>Appreciations -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winter Fair, great to see alums here, including 7th graders who returned. Special thanks to Tiffany who put in a tremendous effort. ● Ski Club roster is in, and with thanks to parents who are giving time, money, rides <p>Minutes: No changes.</p>	<p>Adam motioned to approve and Tala seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p>
<p>Public Comment (5 min)</p>	<p>None.</p>	

<p>Introduction & Welcoming: Director of Student Supports (13 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meghan shares an introduction • Intro to the BOT, our role and work • Collaboration with school leadership - 	<p>Intro and welcome Meghan Carroll -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meghan thanked the board for the welcome, came to winter fair and was really impressed - excited that Hilltown feels that it merges a lot of her previous experience - community work and arts integration. Has worked in Amherst public schools 10 years as a teacher and then as a special education coordinator. Previously worked in mental health. • Lily and members gave an overview of the function that board serves at Hilltown. 	
<p>Committee Reports/Updates (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JEDI: update and next steps • Personnel: Salary scales update; Hiring policy next steps • Education: Updates, leadership, membership, next steps 	<p>Committee Reports/Updates</p> <p>JEDI update and next steps: JEDI on hiatus while we trial board involvement in this work via board representation on the Equity Team. Kathleen bring a formal proposal to ensure that JEDI is on intentional pause while we trial this other effort, including a timeline for checking back in about how it's going. Kathleen will also report to the board quarterly on how she is engaged with the Team and what her involvement will look like.</p> <p>Personnel: salary scales update; hiring policy next steps: Have been focused on salary scales, and doesn't have a hiring policy to bring forth as yet. They are continuing to work through the salary scales, engaging the staff in the process. Presentation showing comparative salaries'wages across districts for BA, MA and TAs. Challenges in comparing appropriately - eg Professional working days, professional development, satisfaction, etc. By bringing to staff via meeting and survey, will understand where staff</p>	

	<p>would like to put effort in terms of how to shape the new scale. They will also look at comparables for the other jobs at Hilltown. Will be added to the final board packet.</p> <p>Education: Update, leadership and membership, next steps. Rebecca, Chris and Adam met last week. Looking for members to join. Priorities: evidence of how arts integration works across subjects and ages; discussed setting benchmarks and digging into fastbridge data. Seeking special ed input, and Rebecca is working on this. Cutting down on opt outs for standardized testing. Looking at chronic absenteeism. Committee is currently Lauren and Adam, Andrea Hearn will come to the January meeting. Rebecca adds that this committee will work towards ensuring arts integration information is communicated and best practices as per our Charter.</p>	
<p>School Leader Updates (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staffing b. Initiatives and Events c. Other 	<p>School Leader Updates -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Staffing - TA turnover is typical, 2nd recess TA also supporting in Blues classroom - Sydney Henthorn. Adam returned to sports reporting, very sorry to lose him. Hired a previous TA back, Kenzie in the greens. A blues TA will be hired for some additional help there. Deb Courage is departing as well and there may not be a direct replacement, depending on restructuring. b. Initiatives and events - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. winter fair 'steals the show' - great success, everything was smooth, music flowed seamlessly, hard work went into 	

	<p>making that happen. Expenses haven't been calculated yet, and we are within \$20 of last year's fundraising.</p> <p>ii. Been revamping MTSS, with help from Marina. Trying to streamline interventions and responses. Marina offered a free evidence based curriculum, Be Good People in k-4. Starting in the Blues, and using it for teacher training and will start using it in classrooms in the spring. This will support existing SEL curriculum. Thinking through ways to bring some of our lesser known curriculum to the fore, to highlight the curriculum.</p> <p>iii. Common Threads - schoolwide initiative building on community time, adding place based community work with actionable outcome that students engage in. Ex - Yellows and Greens are speaking about Wetlands Management with people in the community in this field. Ex Prisms students are identifying problems. They have issues with the Master Schedule, and with this model they would have to come up</p>	
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	<p>with a solution to be presented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">iv. Mini Courses - trying to leverage student leaders as well in the Prism. One of the mini courses was 'how to host your own mini course' for prisms to propose their own courses to play out in the next session of mini course.v. Rebecca adds that the Equity Team is working on Admissions. The ET talking about access and removing barriers to access, including how to reach people all across the sending districts. Rebecca went to Head Start on Vernon Street to present about Hilltown, what we offer. <p>Emily read a statement from SEPAC chair, Cayla Doran:</p> <p>"SEPAC has met monthly since school began with renewed energy and growing interest amongst caregivers. We've had the opportunity to hold meetings with administration as well as some of the newer members of the Special Education Team (Marina Connolly and Danielle Cook). SEPAC has kept abreast of the changes to Hilltown's administrative structure as well as the exciting hire of Meghan Caroll. We look forward to working with Meghan as she settles in at Hilltown and get's to know our students and families. She will be warmly welcomed by SEPAC as well as invited to attend a meeting in the new year.</p>	
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	<p>At monthly meetings all parents are encouraged to participate in “basic rights workshops” offered through the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Chris facilitated the purchase of a school-wide membership to this organization which has opened the door to a variety of resources for all caregivers. Our SEPAC plans to coordinate with the Easthampton Public School SEPAC for joint workshop attendance this winter.</p> <p>SEPAC, with financial support from FoH held a small appreciation for TA's on December 1st. Each was greeted with a coffee of their choice as they arrived to work after the break. We had baked goods for them as well in the Staff Room. It was a quiet way to show our deep gratitude.. On the whole, SEPAC families have reiterated how dedicated the staff have been that work directly with our children. We plan to do something similar after Spring Break for Special Education Staff. It's the high of IEP season for them.</p> <p>Feel free to reach out to Cayla Doran if you have any questions about what's happening with SEPAC.”</p>	
<p>Staff salary scale process update (10 min) Tala</p>	<p>Tala presented findings in the comparison of salary/packages across the sending districts. PPT included in final board packet.</p>	

<p>MCAS Reflections (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BOT members share noticings and wonderings 	<p>MCAS Reflections - Members made observations about what they've noticed on the MCAS scores.</p>	
<p>BOT Office Hours (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1st Trimester Report ● Next steps for Tri 2, Tri 3 	<p>BoT Office Hours - 1st trimester report; next steps</p> <p>Lily gave an update on the office hours with staff members</p> <p>Andrea reports that some staff said they really appreciated that Lily was there and taking the time to listen.</p>	
<p>General Updates & Reminders (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LRP update in Feb/Mar ● HOS rubric update ● HOS eval timeline and midyear report 	<p>General Updates and Reminders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LRP update at Feb or March meeting, work is underway reorientating with what priorities/timeline ● Head of School Rubric is drafted, and working on parallel language. Grace is going to gather input from staff to hear what they want to see on the rubric. Next steps: bring a draft to the Jan or Feb meeting. ● HOS evaluation - will put out surveys in January and bring a midyear summary in February. 	
<p>BOT Meeting Dates (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan/Feb BOT Meetings: Proposed reschedule to Thursdays for ski/ride club <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ January 14th →15th; Feb 11th → 12th ● BOT Retreat: After March Meeting of the Cooperative - May or June 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting dates: move Jan 14 to 15 and Feb 11 to 12 in light of Ski Club ● Annual Meeting tentatively for March 25, but members will contact Lily if that doesn't work for them. ● BoT Retreat, 5:30-8:30 on May 13. 	

<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>Next Meeting Date: 1/15, 6:30pm NL Blurb: Emily Boddy Drinks: Neal Snacks: Adam</p> <p>Next Meeting:</p>	
<p>Adjournment Lily Newman</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:07</p>	<p>Kylan motioned to adjourn; Tala seconded.</p>



Head of School Rubric - January 2026 WORKING DRAFT

Background and Development:

This rubric is a work in progress and in the coming months sample evidence points will be added. After use for a year the BOT and HOS should consider adding levels of proficiency (e.g., beginning, developing, proficient, advanced). It was developed after many changes in leadership and an evolving performance evaluation process. With the establishment of a new Head of School role launched in 2024-2025, work to establish a rubric for this critical primary leader of the school got underway with a Board working group. This group crafted the draft below from the Massachusetts DESE administrator rubrics, prior Hilltown competencies and leader standards, faculty input and an open meeting process that enabled any interested parties to join.

Purpose and Use:

This rubric is intended to capture the Hilltown Head of School (HOS) key functions, competencies and responsibilities to establish a shared understanding of the essential elements of the role and what it looks like to achieve them. It currently includes the indicators for proficiency.

It is designed to be a foundation for reflection and feedback on areas of strength and growth, to inform the goal setting that is the core of the performance evaluation process, and to provide a holistic, high level summary of progress and growth areas. It is used as part of the summative evaluation, coupled with evidence of progress towards the specific leadership goals articulated by the HOS in partnership with the BOT president. Both of these are then considered, with heavier emphasis on progress towards the goals, in the final evaluation.

This rubric is not intended to be the sole basis of or used in its entirety for performance evaluation, such as assessing what percentage of the standards are met to achieve a score.

How this rubric is used in the Head of School evaluation, goal setting and development process:

1. **Self-Assessment & Goal Setting:** The HOS uses the rubric to examine their own practice and to identify areas of strength as well as areas for further growth and development. The HOS uses this along with any relevant data and reflections from prior evaluation cycles or work to develop draft goals.



2. **Goals, Metrics & Learning Plan Development:** The HOS and BOT President together review the rubric along with the HOS's draft goals and other relevant data such as the prior year's evaluation, to finalize the goals, identify specific Indicators for focus during the year and aligned evidence that will serve as measures of progress. Together they identify what supports and professional learning will help the HOS move forward, outlining this in an annual HOS Goals and Learning Plan.
 3. **Implementation of the Goals and Learning Plan:** The HOS and BOT President use the goals established to regularly check in on progress and gather and review the evidence from multiple sources outlined in Step 2 that will support a fair and comprehensive assessment of practice on the goals. Prioritizing indicators aligned to school-wide goals and other leader and staff professional priorities is recommended.
 4. **Formative and Summative Evaluation:**
 - The goals serve as the organizing framework for formative check-ins with data and progress reviews, as well as a formative mid-year progress check and report to the BOT.
 - The rubric is used in the summative evaluation with a high level assessment of overall progress towards the standards.
 - While the HOS and BOT president may decide to set 2-year goals, annual indicators should be established which are the basis for the final annual evaluation report that includes a summary of progress on the rubric as a whole. An explanation of how both the goals and the rubric inform potential areas for further learning and new or adjusted annual goals are also included.
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THE RUBRIC

Organization/Structure:

- **STRAND:** This is the category of leadership, such as Vision and Strategy
- **Standards:** These fall under the strand and each strand varies in how many there are. Each standard is broad with the overarching language that encapsulates much of the indicators
- **Indicators:** More detailed bullets that show what this looks like under the Standard.



STRAND 1: VISION & STRATEGY

Standard	Indicators for Proficiency
A. Shared Vision & Mission Alignment: Collaborates with stakeholders to ensure a shared vision of success and fidelity to the Hilltown mission and charter goals.	1. Centers JEDI (justice, equity, diversity and inclusion) in the school vision and mission, in decisions, policies, and school culture.
	2. Ensures the vision and mission drives schoolwide priorities and instructional expectations.
	3. Effectively invests stakeholders, including students, families, community members, staff, Board of Trustees and partners, in the vision and mission, communicating its purpose and alignment to initiatives and programming.
B. Board Partnership & Governance Alignment: Partners with the Board of Trustees (BOT) to ensure coherence at all levels of the organization and that governance and policy advance the school mission and vision.	1. Communicates thoroughly and proactively with the Board.
	2. Aligns policy, resources, and decisions with mission and student needs.
	3. Ensures compliance with state, charter, and accountability requirements.
C. Strategic Planning, Prioritization and Progress Monitoring: Collaborates with the BOT to lead long range planning, along with aligned goal setting, prioritization and effective use of a variety of data to monitor progress and adjust accordingly.	1. Leads collaborative 5–7 year strategic plans aligned to mission, improvement cycles, and student learning goals.
	2. Establishes and monitors measurable goals and outcomes with clear multi-year and annual objectives aligned to strategic priorities and the long-range plan.
	3. Integrates accountability plans, timelines and priorities into an aligned system of progress monitoring and reporting (long-range planning, Charter Renewal, Accountability Plan, Annual Report).
	4. Communicates the purpose and rationale for initiatives and their connection to long and shorter term goals and plans.



	5. Leads and manages change with a people-centered approach, pacing initiatives for manageability and sustainability and providing aligned resources and supports.
D. Effective Data Use: Uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative data effectively to monitor progress, make appropriate adjustments and illuminate outcomes.	1. Monitors and uses a variety of qualitative and quantitative school-level and disaggregated data to evaluate initiatives, systems and programming to make evidence-based adjustments and set goals for continuous improvement
	2. Leverages a variety of data to eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities and support all students to meet or exceed grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals.
	3. Engages, supports and holds teams accountable to data analysis and action planning.
E. Institutional Advancement: Leverages advocacy, partnerships, dissemination and fundraising to advance the mission and work of the school.	1. Builds community, organizational, and family partnerships.
	2. Engages in advocacy that strengthens opportunities for students and the school, aligning with broader charter and public school advocacy initiatives where relevant.
	3. Aligns external opportunities, partnerships, and resources to long-term school needs.
	4. Plans for and supports dissemination of innovative practices to spread arts-integration practices, build community relationships and advance the work of charter schools in the state
	5. Partners with Friends of Hilltown and other committees and entities to identify and enable initiatives that expand Hilltown’s goals and impact
	6. Partners with sending districts and local school district (Easthampton Public Schools) to cultivate shared solutions and align strategies and resources in service of students and families.

STRAND 2: COMMUNICATION & DECISION-MAKING	
Standard	Indicators for Proficiency



A. Communication Across Stakeholders: Communicates effectively with the full range of stakeholder groups, adapting messaging and formats to the particular needs of each audience.	1. Communicates messages in a clear and timely way, using a range of formats aligned to each audience.
	2. Ensures families, staff, and students receive timely, relevant information pertaining to all aspects of the educational program.
	3. Fosters two-way communication with structures and practices that invite input and dialogue.
B. Decision-Making Processes: Leads clear and strategic decision-making processes that invest the right stakeholders with appropriate roles in key school decisions.	1. Establishes transparent structures for decision authority, collaboration, and input across program areas and stakeholders, ensuring clarity of roles.
	2. Applies decision-making processes consistently and fairly, explaining the rationale grounded in the school mission, data, and student needs.
	3. Creates opportunities for and engages a range of stakeholders, including students, families, staff and community, in relevant decision-making processes.

STRAND 3: LEADING PEOPLE	
Standard	Indicators for Proficiency
A. Staff Growth & Support: Designs and supports the implementation of systematic high quality professional learning and evaluation aligned to school and individual staff goals.	1. Develops and oversees a professional learning system aligned to school priorities, calendar and staff needs.
	2. Includes workshops and PD sessions, planning and collaboration with content-alike peers and individual coaching for classroom implementation.
	3. Enables differentiated development options for role alignment to ensure relevance.
	4. Supports the DOTL to establish coaching and collaborative learning structures.
	5. Aligns evaluation to the professional learning system.



	6. Implements consistent and thorough evaluation processes with direct reports and supports other leaders to do so, including timely, actionable feedback, personalized learning plans and regular check-ins for individual needs and ongoing communication.
	7. Regularly uses staff input and feedback to improve professional learning and personalized supports.
	8. Monitors professional learning system implementation and impact.
<p>B. Shared & Distributed Leadership: Leverages a collaborative leadership approach that ensures multiple perspectives drive leadership through shared and distributed leadership.</p>	1. Provides opportunities for staff to engage in initiatives and leadership at the school beyond the classroom and their designated roles.
	2. Shares leadership and fosters collaborative problem solving through intentional structures and protocols.
	3. Distributes leadership for initiatives, activities and more to those ready and willing, to cultivate shared ownership and broad input into the program.
	4. Ensures supports are in place for teacher leadership development.
	5. Builds strong teams with effective norms, agency in their work, and clear roles, shared responsibilities and accountability.
<p>C. Feedback & Collaborative Culture: Fosters a constructive culture of feedback, reflection, and continuous learning through intentional structures and modeling.</p>	1. Leverages collaborative norms and protocols with group input to create brave spaces for dialog and shared work.
	2. Builds in systematic feedback and input routines to regularly gather multiple perspectives to inform decisions.
	3. Models openness to feedback.
	4. Encourages shared accountability.



STRAND 4: ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP	
Standard	Indicators for Proficiency
A. Curriculum: Guides and supports a clear vision for curriculum and instruction that is aligned to the school's charter/mission.	1. Ensures that all educators have access to and skillfully use high-quality instructional materials through evidence-based, inclusive, and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices.
	2. Supports use of curriculum that is rigorous and meaningful, project-based, arts-infused/integrated, civic and service-oriented.
B. Instruction: Encourages classroom practices that foster deeper learning and engage all students as active participants in their own learning.	1. Supports professional learning, feedback, and support for educators to engage all students as active participants in their own learning of meaningful, mission- and standards-aligned and grade-appropriate content.
	2. Ensures deeper learning by encouraging classroom practices that fosters students' abilities to think critically, ask questions, and analyze sources, perspectives, and biases to deepen learning and make connections between content and real-world problems and events (e.g., issues of identity, equity, power, and justice).
C. Assessment: Supports a balanced and coherent system for the use of a variety of formal and informal assessments and decision-making based on disaggregated data from these tools.	1. Supports strategic adjustments to practice by providing regular collaborative planning time and effectively supporting educators to analyze disaggregated data from a wide range of assessments, as well as feedback from colleagues, students, and families, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gain information about students' progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals, including trends across students or student groups. ● Reflect on instruction and identify actions to reduce disparate outcomes and improve learning for all students.
	2. Promotes and implements data-informed decision making by monitoring and using school-level and disaggregated data, research, and best practices to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflect on strengths and gaps in instructional systems and work to continuously improve instructional practice.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate learning inequities across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability and ability, and other aspects of student identities. • Support all students to meet or exceed grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals. <p>3. Shares progress effectively by supporting educators to collaborate with students and their families, in an accessible format and language, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate specific, timely, and data-informed feedback on student progress towards grade-level standards and/or individual learning goals. • Identify ways to build on students’ strengths and support further growth.
<p>D. Special Education: Builds and supports structures that ensure inclusive practices that accommodate and support individual differences in all students’ learning needs, abilities, interests, and levels of readiness.</p>	<p>1. Ensures inclusive instruction by supporting professional learning, feedback, and resources for educators, including those of students with disabilities (in accordance with relevant IEPs or 504 plans), English learners and former English learners, academically advanced students, and students who have been historically marginalized, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using appropriate inclusive practices, such as tiered supports, educational and assistive technologies, scaffolded instruction, and use of students’ native language to make grade-level content accessible and affirming for all students. • Providing students with multiple ways to learn content and demonstrate understanding.

STRAND 5: CULTURE & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Standard	Indicators for Proficiency
<p>A. Cultivates a Safe, Inclusive, and Student-Centered School Culture: Ensures all students and staff experience a supportive, trauma-informed, identity-affirming environment that promotes belonging,</p>	<p>1. Promotes belonging and relationships by building and sustaining conditions in which students and staff feel known, valued, and supported; models warm-demanding mindsets and high expectations.</p> <p>2. Ensures equity and inclusion with policies, systems, and daily practices that actively identify and remove barriers caused by systemic inequities; leads ongoing equity-centered professional learning.</p>



<p>high expectations, and equitable access to opportunities.</p>	<p>3. Oversees behavior and engagement systems, ensuring consistent, restorative, and trauma-informed responses to student behavior, engagement, and academic progress.</p>
<p>B. Collective Efficacy and a Collaborative School Culture: fosters a collaborative, reflective staff culture rooted in continuous improvement, shared responsibility, and transparent communication.</p>	<p>4. Establishes physical and emotional safety through routines that protect student well-being, mental health, and physical safety; ensures transparent communication around safety protocols.</p>
<p>C. Engages Families, Community Partners, and External Stakeholders: Creates and maintains strong, reciprocal relationships with families, community partners and external stakeholders through active/consistent communication and authentic learning/engagement opportunities.</p>	<p>1. Models and reinforces professional norms, including expectations for professional conduct, collaboration, and communication across teams.</p>
<p>D. Upholds Mission, Vision, and Values Through Daily Leadership: Ensures decisions, policies and practices are fully aligned to Hilltown’s mission, vision and values.</p>	<p>2. Provides robust staff support and growth opportunities, ensuring structures for onboarding, coaching, mentoring, and PD that align with the school’s mission and competencies.</p>
<p></p>	<p>3. Engages in crucial conversations and navigates conflict effectively by facilitating difficult conversations with clarity and empathy; addresses issues proactively and consistently.</p>
<p></p>	<p>4. Distributes leadership by building leadership capacity and opportunities across teams and promoting teacher agency in school-wide decisions.</p>
<p></p>	<p>1. Maintains transparent, culturally responsive family communication systems.</p>
<p></p>	<p>2. Ensures access to a range of student supports and strengthens partnerships that expand wraparound options for students and families.</p>
<p></p>	<p>1. Ensures mission alignment with decisions that reinforce the school’s core values and mission.</p>
<p></p>	<p>2. Ensures coherence and consistency with clear and cohesive school-wide systems and routines.</p>
<p></p>	<p>3. Ensures transparent communication, sharing priorities and plans clearly and consistently with students, staff, families and community partners.</p>



E. Demonstrates Responsive Leadership: Models integrity and empathy in support of all stakeholders in the community.	1. Makes decisions rooted in equity, transparency and fairness.
	2. Demonstrates responsiveness by being accessible and taking timely action around student, staff and family needs.
	3. Cultivates trust through consistent follow through, presence and relationship-building across the school community.

STRAND 6: MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS

Standard	Indicators for Proficiency
A. Safe Learning Environment: Promotes success of all students and staff by ensuring a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment, using resources to implement appropriate curriculum, staffing, and scheduling.	
B. Operational Systems and Routines: Establishes and oversees operational systems, procedures, and routines that ensure a safe learning environment for all students.	1. Implements effective systems for attendance, student entry, dismissal, meals, class transitions, assemblies, and recess.
	2. Partners with and supports custodial/maintenance workers, transportation providers, clerical and administrative assistants, and other staff effectively.
	3. Ensures that all physical spaces are safe, accessible, welcoming, and honor and celebrate the diversity and achievements of the school community.
	4. Collaborates with city and Easthampton school officials to ensure operational and logistical alignment.
B. Recruitment and Hiring: Leads, in collaboration with stakeholders (including students, families, staff, and community members, and particularly those from historically marginalized	1. Recruits and hires diverse and effective educators.
	2. Examines recruitment and hiring policies and procedures to identify and eliminate bias.



<p>communities), an inclusive recruitment and hiring process.</p>	
<p>C. Scheduling: Creates and maintains an effective school schedule and related systems that advance the school mission and priorities.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures equitable access to effective educators, grade-level learning, advanced coursework and elective opportunities, and tiered supports. 2. Prioritizes scheduling for students needing additional supports or services, such as English learners and students with disabilities. 3. Maximizes inclusive opportunities for all students. 4. Allows for effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials 5. Maximizes blocks of uninterrupted instructional time across all content areas (including traditionally non-tested grades and subjects (e.g., arts, physical education, digital literacy and computer science, STEM fields, History/Social Studies).
<p>D. Professional Collaboration: Establishes systems and structures, including common planning time, to support effective communication and collaboration among educators, including general education, special education, paraeducators, English learner education, and support staff, in support of shared goals for student learning.</p>	
<p>E. Laws, Policies: Understands and complies with state and federal laws and mandates, school committee policies, and collective bargaining agreements. Identifies and advocates for changes to laws, mandates, policies, and guidelines that inhibit equity.</p>	
<p>F. Ethical Behavior: Adheres to the school and/or district's existing code of ethics.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures all community members follow the school's code of ethics. 2. Protects student, family, and staff confidentiality and ensures staff and relevant stakeholders do the same.
<p>G. School Budget: Develops an equity-centered school budget that</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures the budget reflects data-informed decision-making for improved and more equitable learning outcomes for all students.



<p>aligns with the school’s vision, mission, and goals.</p>	<p>2. Leverages input from a diverse range of stakeholders in developing the budget, including students, families, staff, and community members, and particularly those from historically marginalized communities.</p>
	<p>3. Communicates fiscal matters to the school community and relevant stakeholders in a transparent and timely manner.</p>
<p>H. Access to Resources: Effectively allocates and manages expenditures aligned with district/school goals and available resources.</p>	<p>1. Ensures resource identification and allocation promotes an equitable and culturally responsive school community with equitable access for staff and students, including high-quality instructional materials and aligned professional learning.</p>



Personnel Committee Proposal to the Board of Trustees

Date: 12.29/25

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.

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.

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 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



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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



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> Alex Porter</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>	