



**HCCPS Board of Trustees**

**Meeting Agenda**

**Wednesday March 11th, 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: Climate Survey, LRP Proposal, other packet items**

**Facilitator: Lily Newman**

Topic	Who	Action	Est. Start Time
<b>Welcoming (read mission statement):</b> (5 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements</li> <li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper, norm observer</li> <li>● BOT visibility this month</li> <li>● Approve minutes from Feb BoT mtg</li> </ul>	Lily Newman	Decision	6:30 pm
<b>Public Comment</b> (5 min)	Lily Newman		6:35
<b>School Leader Updates</b> (5 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staffing</li> <li>● Initiatives and Events</li> <li>● Key spring dates</li> </ul>	Chris Kusek, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Meghan Carroll	Discussion	6:40
<b>Climate Survey Summary and Report</b> (15 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Summary of results</li> <li>● Analysis and implications</li> <li>● Discussion and next steps</li> </ul>	Meghan Carroll Rebecca Belcher-Timme	Discussion	6:45
<b>Long Range Plan Report and Proposal</b> (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Context, then and now</li> </ul>	Lily Newman, Chris Kusek	Discussion & Decision	7:00



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of progress</li> <li>• Proposed next steps</li> </ul>			
<b>Personnel Committee</b> (20 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary Scales - Teachers/TAs</li> <li>• Salary Scales - Admin Staff</li> </ul>	Tala Elia	Discussion & Decision	7:10
<b>Head of School Compensation Proposal</b> (15 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review HOS compensation proposal</li> </ul>	Tala Elia	Discussion & Decision	7:30
<b>FY27 Budget Impact Summary</b> (10 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of draft budget impacts with salary scales included</li> </ul>	Chris Kusek	Discussion	7:45
<b>GABS</b> (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vote on new members</li> <li>• Approve bylaws ahead of Annual Meeting</li> </ul>	Emily Boddy	Discussion & Decision	7:55
<b>General Updates &amp; Reminders</b> (5 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb BOT Office Hours Summary</li> <li>• Mar Annual Mtg - Agenda Overview, asks, needs</li> <li>• Reschedule BOT retreat to June</li> </ul>	Lily Newman	Discussion	8:05
<b>Wrap Up</b> (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norm review</li> <li>• Action items review</li> <li>• Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb</li> <li>• Next steps/April meeting agenda items</li> <li>• Snacks and drinks for April</li> </ul>	Lily Newman	Decision	8:10
<b>Adjournment</b>	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**

**February 12, 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,, Lily Newman, Emily Boddy, Lauren Ames, Adam Szymkowicz, Neal Teague, Kathleen Hulton, Ben Carlis, Steve Sell

By Zoom: Kylan Mandile

Regrets: Andrea Hermans, Tala Elia

Guests: Sarah Jane Pointdexter, Sarah Buttenweiser

By Zoom: None

Facilitator: Lily Newman

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: Ben Carlis

Timekeeper: Neal Teague

Mission statement read by: Ben Carlis

<b>Topic (estimated time)</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
<p><b>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Tala Elia):</b> (5 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgement</li> <li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper</li> <li>● BOT Visibility leading into start of year</li> <li>● Approve minutes from January BoT mtg</li> </ul> <p>Lily Newman</p>	<p><b>Appreciations:</b></p> <p>Adam thanks those who joined the first LIP meeting (new academic committee), and Grace for helping with Open Meetings.</p> <p>Ski Club went well, big thanks to Jenn Stauffer who will be leaving Hilltown (child graduating).</p> <p><b>Board Visibility:</b></p> <p>Will review in the Leadership section.</p> <p>Minutes: No changes.</p>	<p>Lauren motioned to approve and Adam seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment</b> (5 min)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p><b>HOS Midyear Performance Check Reflection</b> (20)</p>	<p>Mid Year report Included in packet.</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p><b>min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Framing, process</li> <li>● Reflection from HOS, BOT President</li> <li>● Discussion</li> </ul> <p><b>Chris / Lily</b></p>	<p>Lily framed the process and effort to bring forth the mid year report. High level - will hear more about the survey content at the next meeting. Rubric is not integrated yet, not reflected in this report.</p> <p>Chris notes that he both considered the things to celebrate at hilltown, and the challenges. Reflected on the survey, on all that is going on in the school at present. Reflects that the pace of change can feel hard - parents, staff - and sees there is a desire for some steadiness, breathing room. This is learning for the admin team, and they are working on adjusting.</p> <p>Priorities moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase classroom presence, check in more with staff</li> <li>● Reduce competing priorities for people, so they don't feel pulled in too many directions</li> <li>● Better communicate the rationale that supports change decisions.</li> </ul> <p>Lily notes that we will also look at student climate survey data in future.</p> <p>Kathleen points out all the ways the board has asked for a lot of change from our new leaders, and that these changes are indicative of 'maturing' - no longer a "scrappy" upstart. Growing pains are to be expected. Moving in the right direction, and grateful to our leaders.</p>	
<p><b>School Leader Updates (15 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staffing</li> <li>b. Initiatives and Events</li> <li>c. Key spring dates</li> <li>d. Other</li> </ul> <p>- <b>Chris / Rebecca / Meghan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cass departed to take a meaningful job outside of education. Chris expresses gratitude for Cass</li> <li>○ Caroline Johnson has stepped in to help fill the gap for now, handling Kids Club</li> <li>○ Jasper Sargent, had been subbing, and now covering</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

	<p>direct classroom support hours</p> <p>b. Integration Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reds/oranges are working on sound and integrating across arts. Easthampton Cultural Council grant - Springfield Symphony Orchestra will bring their Musical Petting Zoo to the school for kids to play with.</li> <li>○ Yellows/Greens working on an Opera about seeds. Spring performance.</li> </ul> <p>c. Common Threads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Renee is going to visit to observe civic action work. She met with teachers on Jan 26. Kids are thinking through action with the community. This is the first year, laying a foundation, and will continue to grow.</li> </ul> <p>d. Meghan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Training on inclusive practices for grades 5-8. Teachers learning new strategies around co-teaching</li> <li>○ Working with school psych around Multi Tiered Systems of Support - working through referral process, make systems for SEL/behavioral supports more consistent and clear - both personalized and a consistent structure.</li> </ul> <p>e. Initiatives and Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Middle School Dance - Winter in Paris Feb 27th</li> <li>○ Coffee Hour Feb 27th</li> </ul>	
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Final Minutes Approved on:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bingo - March 6 with the Mattrays</li> <li>○ AllSport Fundraiser on March 12 (early release day)</li> <li>○ ArtSpark - April 10 at the Jupiter Club. The Auction will be online and culminate at Artspark.</li> <li>○ Admissions- open houses were well attended.</li> <li>○ New flyer forthcoming to be put around town</li> </ul> <p>f. Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Advocacy Fair Funding Week - Facilities funding was the focus this year. Largest threats to our funding were avoided this year.</li> <li>○</li> </ul>	
<p><b>GABS (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● March Meeting of the Cooperative</li> <li>● New member vote and welcome: Sarah Buttenweiser</li> </ul> <p><b>Emily Boddy</b></p>	<p>Sarah introduced herself - former parent at Hilltown, going back to Brassworks. Formerly served on the GABS committee. Loves the school.</p> <p>GABS reported out update about by-laws: will be brought forward at March Meeting</p> <p>Annual meeting structure change this year: shorter portion, less presentation, issue more detailed summary of the issues being voted on ahead, rather than discussing at the meeting.</p> <p>Moving forward: we may address with a by law change or re-envision the board aspect to the meeting.</p>	<p>Vote by role to approve Sarah Buttenweiser to the BoT:</p> <p>Kathleen Hulton - yes  Steve Sell - yes  Neal Teague - yes  Ben Carlis - yes  Lily Newman - yes  Emily Boddy - yes  Lauren Ames- yes  Adam Szymkowicz - yes</p>
<p><b>Personnel Committee (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Hiring Policy</li> <li>● Substitute Compensation Policy</li> </ul>	<p>Sub Compensation Policy included in Packet</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve the Substitute</p>

Final Minutes Approved on:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary scale updates and next steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Rebecca</b></p>	<p>Rebecca presented - addition of Admin role.</p> <p>Hiring Policy: Grappling with how to integrate caregiver feedback in a meaningful way. New process is outlined in the policy, after much reflection and deliberation of the committee.</p> <p>Salary Scale Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel still working to create the salary scales</li> <li>• Survey was sent to the staff to find out priorities of the staff. Feedback was clear that keeping up with local district's pay is the priority.</li> </ul>	<p>compensation policy and Neal seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Neal motioned to approve the Hiring policy and Ben seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>
<p><b>Finance Committee (15 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q2 Financials</li> <li>• Fiscal Policy Updates</li> </ul> <p><b>Chris (Kylan)</b></p>	<p><b>Fiscal Policy</b></p> <p>Kylan reported that the Fiscal Policy was Updated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect current structure</li> <li>• Increased the thresholds intentionally and reasonably, in conversation with auditor</li> <li>• Adheres to the recommended governance that DESE has provided</li> </ul> <p>Periodically review fiscal policies to ensure we are in compliance. Policies hadn't been updated in a while, so the policies match current reality of the situation.</p> <p>Chris and Lily reviewed some details of the changes, as outlined in the document</p> <p><b>Q2 Financials</b></p> <p>We remain in healthy financial condition. Tuition is more than what we projected. Right now healthy mid year pacing, strong cost controls. Per pupil tuition tracking is expected.</p> <p>Fundraising performed well (eg winter fair</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve the Fiscal Policy Updates and Adam seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Ben motioned to approve the revised budget for FY26 and Adam seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Neal motioned to approve the Transfer of Funds from Checking to Capital Reserves Account and Kathleen seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>

Final Minutes Approved on:

	<p>120% what we thought); Kids' club income stays steady, demand stays high; federal and state grants remain solid - no changes have impacted HCCPS financially</p> <p>Expense highlights: personnel costs as expected; health insurance as expected, but expect major increase in health care costs next year; higher than avg in PD and SIS - which will stabilize next year after initial start up costs.</p> <p>Building and maintenance costs are up across the board, and we can expect that to continue.</p> <p>Need to begin to invest in some building modernization and modifications.</p> <p>BoT needs to vote on the revised FY26 budget, as represented on page 22 of the packet, entitled Proposed Midyear Revision.</p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> Finance Committee requested that money, as laid out in proposal in packet, be transferred back to the capital reserve account. Will require vote from the BoT.</p>	
<p><b>Education Committee (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates, Membership</li> <li>• Next Steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Adam / Lauren</b></p>	<p>LIP - Learning, Impact, Purpose Committee</p> <p>Met in January for first meeting - BoT: Adam, Lauren Staff: Andrea Hearn, Marina Donnelly Admin: Chris, Rebecca, Grace, Meghan</p> <p>Giving board a view into academic policy, what is being taught and how, data + trends, advance transparency while holding true to academic goals in the school, field questions about data.</p> <p>Will start with 3/4 math and english data to ID trends, make it more comprehensible</p> <p>Work of the committee might look different</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

	<p>depending on the time of year - eg fall/winter more forward thinking, spring look at raw data</p> <p>Plan: Review Accountability Plan Review data from grades ¾, assigned data reviewers</p> <p>May be able to feed out some small observations in April, possibly May.</p>	
<p><b>JEDI (5 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve adapted plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Kathleen Hulton</b></p>	<p>Proposal is included in the packet</p> <p>Kathleen walked through the proposal.</p> <p>Kathleen currently serving at the liaison, ahead of full implementation. She has gone to two meetings, but is open to continuing in the role or opening it up to someone else.</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve trial board liaison to the equity team, as outlined in the proposal with no amendments, and Neal seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Steve motioned to approve Kathleen the liaison to the equity team and Lauren seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>
<p><b>General Updates &amp; Reminders (5 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb BOT Office Hours 2/26</li> <li>• LRP update in Mar</li> <li>• Mar Annual Mtg</li> <li>• BOT retreat in May 13: 5-8</li> </ul> <p><b>Lily</b></p>	<p>Lily summarized the updates.</p> <p>Kathleen and Lauren will do orders and pick up for dinner.</p>	

Final Minutes Approved on:

<p><b>Wrap Up</b> (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action items review</li> <li>- Next steps/meeting agenda items</li> <li>- Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb</li> <li>- Snacks and drinks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action items:</b></p> <p>Next Meeting Date: 3/11, 6:30pm  Annual Meeting: 3/25, 6:30pm  NL Blurb: Emily Boddy  Drinks: Lily  Snacks: Neal</p> <p><b>Next Meeting:</b>  By Laws  Annual Meeting  Equity update from Kathleen  LRP Update</p>	
<p><b>Adjournment</b>  Lily Newman</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:00</p>	<p>Tala motioned to adjourn; Adam seconded.</p>

DRAFT

Final Minutes Approved on:



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<b>Topic (estimated time)</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action (if necessary)</b>
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<p><b>HOS Midyear Performance Check Reflection</b> (20)</p>	<p>Mid Year report Included in packet.</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salary scale updates and next steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Rebecca</b></p>	<p>Rebecca presented - addition of Admin role.</p> <p>Hiring Policy: Grappling with how to integrate caregiver feedback in a meaningful way. New process is outlined in the policy, after much reflection and deliberation of the committee.</p> <p>Salary Scale Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel still working to create the salary scales</li> <li>• Survey was sent to the staff to find out priorities of the staff. Feedback was clear that keeping up with local district’s pay is the priority.</li> </ul>	<p>compensation policy and Neal seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Neal motioned to approve the Hiring policy and Ben seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>
<p><b>Finance Committee (15 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q2 Financials</li> <li>• Fiscal Policy Updates</li> </ul> <p><b>Chris (Kylan)</b></p>	<p><b>Fiscal Policy</b></p> <p>Kylan reported that the Fiscal Policy was Updated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect current structure</li> <li>• Increased the thresholds intentionally and reasonably, in conversation with auditor</li> <li>• Adheres to the recommended governance that DESE has provided</li> </ul> <p>Periodically review fiscal policies to ensure we are in compliance. Policies hadn’t been updated in a while, so the policies match current reality of the situation.</p> <p>Chris and Lily reviewed some details of the changes, as outlined in the document</p> <p><b>Q2 Financials</b></p> <p>We remain in healthy financial condition. Tuition is more than what we projected. Right now healthy mid year pacing, strong cost controls. Per pupil tuition tracking is expected.</p> <p>Fundraising performed well (eg winter fair</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve the Fiscal Policy Updates and Adam seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Ben motioned to approve the revised budget for FY26 and Adam seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Neal motioned to approve the Transfer of Funds from Checking to Capital Reserves Account and Kathleen seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>

	<p>120% what we thought); Kids' club income stays steady, demand stays high; federal and state grants remain solid - no changes have impacted HCCPS financially</p> <p>Expense highlights: personnel costs as expected; health insurance as expected, but expect major increase in health care costs next year; higher than avg in PD and SIS - which will stabilize next year after initial start up costs.</p> <p>Building and maintenance costs are up across the board, and we can expect that to continue.</p> <p>Need to begin to invest in some building modernization and modifications.</p> <p>BoT needs to vote on the revised FY26 budget, as represented on page 22 of the packet, entitled Proposed Midyear Revision.</p> <p><b>Proposal:</b></p> <p>Finance Committee requested that money, as laid out in proposal in packet, be transferred back to the capital reserve account. Will require vote from the BoT.</p>	
<p><b>Education Committee (10 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updates, Membership</li> <li>● Next Steps</li> </ul> <p><b>Adam / Lauren</b></p>	<p>LIP - Learning, Impact, Purpose Committee</p> <p>Met in January for first meeting - BoT: Adam, Lauren Staff: Andrea Hearn, Marina Donnelly Admin: Chris, Rebecca, Grace, Meghan</p> <p>Giving board a view into academic policy, what is being taught and how, data + trends, advance transparency while holding true to academic goals in the school, field questions about data.</p> <p>Will start with 3/4 math and english data to ID trends, make it more comprehensible</p> <p>Work of the committee might look different</p>	

	<p>depending on the time of year - eg fall/winter more forward thinking, spring look at raw data</p> <p>Plan: Review Accountability Plan Review data from grades ¾, assigned data reviewers</p> <p>May be able to feed out some small observations in April, possibly May.</p>	
<p><b>JEDI (5 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve adapted plan</li> </ul> <p><b>Kathleen Hulton</b></p>	<p>Proposal is included in the packet</p> <p>Kathleen walked through the proposal.</p> <p>Kathleen currently serving at the liaison, ahead of full implementation. She has gone to two meetings, but is open to continuing in the role or opening it up to someone else.</p>	<p>Lily motioned to approve trial board liaison to the equity team, as outlined in the proposal with no amendments, and Neal seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p> <p>Steve motioned to approve Kathleen the liaison to the equity team and Lauren seconded; the Board approved the policy by consensus.</p>
<p><b>General Updates &amp; Reminders (5 min)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feb BOT Office Hours 2/26</li> <li>• LRP update in Mar</li> <li>• Mar Annual Mtg</li> <li>• BOT retreat in May 13: 5-8</li> </ul> <p><b>Lily</b></p>	<p>Lily summarized the updates.</p> <p>Kathleen and Lauren will do orders and pick up for dinner.</p>	

<p><b>Wrap Up</b> (5 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Action items review</li> <li>- Next steps/meeting agenda items</li> <li>- Minutes finalization, Newsletter blurb</li> <li>- Snacks and drinks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Action items:</b></p> <p>Next Meeting Date: 3/11, 6:30pm  Annual Meeting: 3/25, 6:30pm  NL Blurb: Emily Boddy  Drinks: Lily  Snacks: Neal</p> <p><b>Next Meeting:</b>  By Laws  Annual Meeting  Equity update from Kathleen  LRP Update</p>	
<p><b>Adjournment</b>  Lily Newman</p>	<p>Meeting adjourned at 8:00</p>	<p>Tala motioned to adjourn; Adam seconded.</p>



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

## **Long Range Plan**

**2023 - 2028**

**Final Version to the Board of Trustees**

**April, 2023**

### **The Long Range Planning Committee**

**Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Teacher**

**Laura Davis, Director of Teaching and Learning**

**Kathleen Hulton, Board of Trustees**

**Dan Klatz, Board of Trustees**

**Natalia Korczak, Parent**

**Lily Newman, Parent**

**Polly Normand, Parent**

**Kate Saccento, Director of Administration**

**Gina Wyman, Teacher**



# HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

## **Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Long Range Plan - 2023-2028**

This is the third strategic plan in the history of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS). The first two plans, completed in 2003 and 2013 respectively, paved the way for structural changes to the educational program; major changes to the size of the school; and significant changes in the facilities including a move from Williamsburg to Easthampton. The current initiative was scheduled to begin in 2019, but was delayed for two years as a result of leadership changes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was fortuitous that the process of strategic planning was delayed, as the school and the world were very different in 2021. Many of the changes that occurred between 2019 and 2021 were directly related to the pandemic, but they extended much further. During this period, there were further leadership changes at the school. These stressors highlighted programmatic issues that had existed in previous years, including issues around race and equity, giving them a heightened sense of urgency.

The process of creating this plan began in the Fall of 2021. A Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee was formed that included board members, administrators, teachers, and caregivers. The first task of this committee was to look at the mission of the school. The LRP Committee and the Board of Trustees decided to affirm the current mission:

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

The next step was to obtain information regarding priorities from the community. Teachers and caregivers were surveyed electronically, and a focus group was held with the full Board of Trustees. The LRP Committee then discussed and synthesized information from these sources. Over the course of

many months, the LRP Committee drafted initial goals. These draft goals were distributed to the community, and sessions were held with all stakeholders to obtain further feedback. This feedback was discussed by the committee and goals were amended and finalized.

Unlike previous strategic plans, this plan is more limited. The scope of the plan is designed to last for five years. There is no hierarchy of priorities; the LRP Committee views all of the goals as highly important and demanding of action. Consequently, there are priorities that while valid, are not included in this plan. This is intentional, as the LRP Committee believes that a sustained, clear, and focused effort on the goals enumerated in this plan is paramount at this time. The priorities identified in this plan are as follows:

- Cultivate a vibrant culture and community
- Weave justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of HCCPS
- Align schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence that meets the developmental needs of our students

Each goal includes the positions that are responsible for implementation as well as a means for progress monitoring. It was the intention of the LRP Committee to develop these goals, yet it is the responsibility of the HCCPS Board of Trustees and administrative leadership to create the implementation plan.

## **Goal 1: Cultivate a vibrant culture and community**

HCCPS's Long Range Plan comes at a time of significant transition in education and for the school itself. The previous plan established the changes that settled the school into the Easthampton campus and addressed enrollment and other related changes as part of the relocation.

In the time since the last Long Range Plan was developed, the school has had significant changes in all program areas, and the impacts from the multi-year coronavirus pandemic have become increasingly clear as we try to adapt to a "new normal." This new normal demands significant changes in our school culture and approach to community to meet the evolving assets and needs of our students, families, and staff. Moreover, as a result of the pandemic and the years prior, staffing changes at all levels of the organization have meant that 40 percent of current teachers joined the team within the last three years. Our Director of Teaching and Learning is among the new staff members, having joined this year after the previous director's resignation at the end of school year 2021-2022. Other staff in critical leadership roles have been in those roles for less than three years. These transitions, especially in a small school, have a profound impact on the work of educators who must be guided to align with the shared school vision and deliver on the promise of the program to students and families.

Yet all this change also marks an opportunity. While our LRP process illuminated areas of concern from our community and staff, it also highlighted areas of celebration. We have an opportunity to build upon these areas of celebration and remake these areas of concern, shaping this "new normal" into one of our making. With this in mind and with the input and data from our myriad stakeholder surveys, interviews, discussion, etc., we believe it is imperative that the school begin the process of change with establishing a shared vision of our community at its best. using that as the north star to guide all other improvements.

The social and emotional health of our community was stretched and challenged during the pandemic, and those experiences need time and support to heal and reconcile. This is true for our young people and adults alike, and it is with this purpose that specific and intentional action steps are outlined in this plan. In addition, the expansion of our middle school over the years at our new site requires that we look closely at how we support adolescents in developing the habits of success and interpersonal skills to foster a positive middle grades community that inspires our younger students to excel.

Our community connections and partnerships between families and the school were strained in the time of social distancing. As we have pushed ourselves to address justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI) in all aspects of the school, it has become increasingly clear that some of our approaches to family engagement and partnership fall short of embracing our community fully and ensuring that all members feel valued, celebrated and part of a meaningful partnership on behalf of their students.

Part of ensuring that all members of the community feel included is ensuring that each member's voice is heard and valued. Hearing and encouraging student, staff, and caregiver feedback and involvement has been part of the HCCPS mission and culture since its inception. However, the LRP Committee has

identified a lack of transparency around decision making at HCCPS. When community members have no clear understanding of how decisions are made and who is responsible for those decisions, it is difficult to feel heard and understood. Hence, the process of decision making, including the role of community feedback, should be clearly mapped out and communicated. Moreover, systems should be in place to ensure that this communication is reiterated and continuously understood. All these steps, increasing social and emotional supports, building stronger community ties through events and traditions, and mapping and communicating the decision-making processes will help to restore the HCCPS community to its former vibrancy and beyond.

**Purpose:** Build on our community foundations and our learnings from this period of disruption to positively transform the social and emotional experiences of students and staff and our community; respond to the immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic on students, teachers, families, and the entire community; address the systems and practices that create coherent and sustainable solutions for the present and future.

**Rationale:** A strong community is at the core of the HCCPS mission. Our community has been challenged over the past several years, and further disrupted by the crisis of the pandemic. Disruptions include practical changes in how we interact, the effect of widespread stress, academic disruptions, and the impact of navigating difficult decisions on divisive topics. At the same time, we have learned from this challenging period and can apply those learnings to innovate together towards a new and more cohesive HCCPS.

- Social and academic dysregulation has been on the rise for the past decade
- Examples of logistical disruptions include: fewer parents in the building for pick-up and drop-off, fewer community events, loss of in-person teacher meetings, loss of in-person All School events
- Examples of stress-related disruptions include an increase in student behavioral health needs and delays in social problem-solving skills
- Examples of academic disruptions include a higher rate of students behind grade-level expectations in reading, writing, and math
- Examples of difficult decisions that have had an impact on the community include whether and when to return to school in-person, and whether and when to require masking
- Examples of learnings include the recognition of our very diverse social and emotional experiences, the understanding that we need developmentally appropriate, systematic, coherent and sustainable ways to support social and emotional learning (SEL) across all grade levels, and that teachers need their own SEL supports as well as curriculum and training for teaching SEL across nine grade levels in multi-age settings

**Fiscal Implications:** Moderate based on recommendations, and may include curricular materials, training, coaching, and staff

## **Action Steps:**

### **A) Social and Emotional Supports**

1. Confirm our shared vision of an excellent SEL approach, identify where we are now and what it will take to close the gap
2. Develop an action and monitoring plan for reaching our vision with clear indicators for success (i.e., data, look-fors)
3. Refine the scope and sequence of our SEL curriculum and approach
4. Enhance personnel resources to address behavioral needs of students
5. Develop and refine a whole-school schedule centered on offering consistency and predictability for staff and students
6. Determine and implement high-impact strategies for staff wellness and sustainability

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning

**Progress Monitoring:** The Director of Teaching and Learning will provide updates to the Board of Trustees and the whole school community twice a year for four years

### **B) School Culture/Family Engagement**

1. Reintroduce and reinvigorate in-person events
2. Redefine family engagement at HCCPS aligned to our current and evolving community
3. Refine existing strategies that work and establish new ways of involving families/caregivers
4. Reinvigorate our traditions and rituals in culturally relevant ways to bring our community together

**Accountability:** Director of Administration, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator

**Progress Monitoring:** The Director of Administration and the Community and Family Engagement Coordinator will provide updates to the Board of Trustees and the whole school community twice a year for four years

### **C) Communication and Decision-making**

1. Map organizational decision-making processes to create clarity and transparency
2. Revisit the idea of staff Board members being voting members
3. Organize and update the Board Book, which contains policies related to the governance of the school
4. Establish new ways of effectively communicating our decision-making process to the community

**Accountability:** Board of Trustees President, Board of Trustees, Domain Council

**Progress Monitoring:** The Board President will lead a process to complete these goals one year from the adoption of this Long Range Plan

## **Goal 2: Weave justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of HCCPS**

The second goal of the HCCPS Long Range Plan is to center justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) into the school's policies and practices. JEDI promotion is increasingly becoming a top priority for schools around the world. Since its founding in 1995, HCCPS has addressed these issues, but the ways in which it has done so have been largely dependent on the initiative of individual staff and community members. Over the next five years, HCCPS seeks to center JEDI in the culture, policies, practices, and curriculum of the school at all levels.

JEDI goes beyond the promotion of “celebration of difference” or “tolerance” to instead critically examine the effects of historic systemic racism and other forms of oppression. Focusing on JEDI issues will help HCCPS to meet its stated mission by working toward ensuring that students with diverse identities and life experiences have access to what they need in order to succeed, and for families, faculty, and staff members from all backgrounds to be welcomed and feel a sense of belonging in our school community.

This goal will focus our efforts to strive toward equity at HCCPS regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, disability, or other aspects of identity. We acknowledge that HCCPS's policies, practices, and structures to date have sought to provide a school environment that supports access for a wide range of students and families in Hampshire and Franklin Counties, and to build a supportive community. By making JEDI an explicit priority, we acknowledge that improvements are possible, and that we are committed to continuing to work toward creating a safe and equitable school option for all current and future students, staff, and families. By committing to these practices, HCCPS will be better equipped to serve historically marginalized groups of students and to better ensure that all students succeed.

**Purpose:** Define what JEDI means at HCCPS, and codify it in policy and practices with intentional plans for sustainability. Better reflect the population of our sending districts in the HCCPS population

### **Rationale/Context:**

- HCCPS has committed to JEDI, but the definition, practices and plan for implementation and monitoring need to be clearly defined
- Presently, it is unclear what groups, individuals, and positions are responsible for JEDI in the school, how they work together, and who does what
- HCCPS is a public school, but does not reflect the population of area public schools
- Word of mouth about HCCPS spreads amongst a homogeneous cross section of families in the Valley
- Current outreach practices have not yielded significant results.

**Fiscal Implications:** Minimal to significant, based on recommendations

## **Action Steps:**

### **A) Develop a clear progression and integration of JEDI goals in the curriculum K-8, including parity between grade level partners**

1. Respond to Equity Audit curricular-related recommendations
2. Formally document relevant areas of the curriculum and establish cycles of implementation review and updating
3. Include all relevant co-curricular activities
4. Include JEDI in the HCCPS Community Compact

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2022-23. The Director of Teaching and Learning will provide updates to the Board of Trustees and the whole school community twice a year.

Complete by the end of 2024-25

### **B) Evaluate and revise schoolwide structures to integrate JEDI purpose and language**

1. Respond to Equity Audit administrative-related recommendations
2. Ensure sure there are JEDI responsibilities embedded in job descriptions
3. Decide on a number of defined JEDI events per year: staff trainings, board trainings, community events, student events (e.g., once a month, All School has a JEDI component)
4. Design community-building to be meaningful for English Learners

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Administration, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2023-24. Progress updates to the Board of Trustees twice a year. Complete by the end of 2025-26

### **C) Evaluate and revise Board of Trustee structures to integrate JEDI purpose and language**

1. Respond to Equity Audit Board-related recommendations
2. Clearly articulate JEDI work in Board member responsibilities
3. Actively work to increase Board diversity, specifically in community member representation
4. Communicate structures to the school community: clearly defined roles, jobs, committees with clearly defined responsibilities
5. Create a JEDI mission statement (e.g., anti-racism statement) that clearly defines what JEDI ideally looks like, and what is encompassed in JEDI at Hilltown

**Accountability:** Board of Trustees, Board President

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2022-23. Progress updates to the Board of Trustees annually. Complete by the end of 2024-25.

**D) Achieve enrollment parity with our sending districts**

1. Increase admissions access to HCCPS for all students in Hampshire and Franklin counties
2. Create a more robust recruitment process with specific strategies for historically underserved populations that are underrepresented at HCCPS
3. Investigate and make recommendations regarding transportation options in Hampshire and Franklin Counties
4. Evaluate before- and after-school programs with an eye toward serving the needs of a more diverse student population

**Accountability:** Director of Administration, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2022-23. Progress updates to the Board of Trustees annually. Relevant fiscal recommendations to the Board prior to budget decisions annually. Transportation cost estimates to the Board of Trustees by January, 2024. Decision by Board of Trustees by May, 2024

### **Goal 3: Align schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence that meets the developmental needs of our students**

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that the school's primary attention be focused on issues of health and safety. In its wake, HCCPS must turn its attention back to creating a shared vision of excellence, evaluating the academic strengths and needs of our students, examining the configuration of our mixed-grade classrooms, and considering our weekly school day structure.

Teachers have been immersed in important work in the area of literacy and the science of reading. The school has committed to approaching reading instruction based on the results of their research. These best practices in the science of reading have implications for how to best group students to support emerging reading skills. At this and other levels, the school must examine the current grade level configurations to meet the needs of the curriculum and developmental needs of our students.

In alignment with the JEDI goals in this Long Range Plan, the school must evaluate whether the current half day Wednesday model in grades K-5 is equitable. The current model requires K-5 families to make a child care plan from 12:30-3:00 every week. There is a strong need to closely examine the impact this and other school structures have on our community, and determine if they may be barriers in attracting and retaining students from a wide variety of demographics.

**Purpose:** Better meet the developmental, academic, social, and emotional needs of all students, including grade level alignment, curricular choices, administrative and teaching staff, and whole-school schedule

#### **Rationale/Context:**

- There are unique developmental needs at all levels, some of which demand different grade level groupings than currently exist
- Academic structures, strategies and curricular materials require alignment and coherence to be effective. HCCPS is committed to balancing essential skills instruction with authentic, project-based learning
- There are unique demands of our varied assessment systems. There are unique technology needs for different age groups
- Structures should address the unique social-emotional, developmental, and academic needs of all students
- HCCPS is committed to providing the necessary support for staff to support all students to thrive

**Fiscal Implications:** Moderate to significant.

## Action Steps:

### **A) Evaluate the academic strengths and needs of our students, and identify detailed goals and implementation plans to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our vision and priorities (e.g., pacing curriculum implementation and integrated projects; establishing assessment systems and processes; establishing common high-leverage instructional practices)**

1. Define what an excellent arts-integrated academic program and culture looks like that matches the vision of our school and developmental and learning needs of students
2. Conduct a data “deep dive” to identify where we are excelling towards this vision and where we need to improve (e.g., student outcomes, curriculum and instruction)
3. Identify top priority areas for focused work, including structures and academics. Consider how our structures (i.e., grade levels, course offerings, groupings, etc.) advance our priorities, and where they create barriers

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Administration

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2022-23. Progress updates to the Board of Trustees annually. Complete by the end of 2024-25.

### **B) Examine alternative mixed-grade classroom reconfigurations and establish a final plan and implementation steps if change is recommended**

1. Engage the Education Domain in a comprehensive review
2. Obtain feedback from caregivers
3. Develop a draft approach and action plan and criteria for success

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Administration

**Progress Monitoring:** Complete during the 2023-24 school year. Make recommendations to the Board by May 2024. If changes are recommended, implement beginning in Fall 2025

### **C) Consider realignment of the school day to better meet the needs of the community**

1. Examine the impact of how we use time and the supplemental after-school care we provide on our community including the impacts of half days and possible solutions to maintain staff collaboration time and enrich the student experience
2. Determine innovative strategies to better meet the needs of our community with our schedule including the feasibility and impact of before- and after-school care on access to and retention in our program
3. Determine if the length of the day would change if we went to five full days

**Accountability:** Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Administration

**Progress Monitoring:** Initiate activity in 2022-23. Progress updates to the Board of Trustees annually. Complete no later than the 2024-25 school year

## Long Range Plan Accountability Chart

<b>Goal 1: Cultivate a vibrant culture and community</b>										
<b>A. Social and Emotional Supports</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Confirm our shared vision of an excellent SEL approach, identify where we are now and what it will take to close the gap										
2. Develop an action and monitoring plan for reaching our vision with clear indicators for success (data, look-fors)										
3. Refine the scope and sequence of our SEL curriculum and approach										
4. Enhance personnel resources to address behavioral needs of students										
5. Develop and refine a whole-school schedule centered on offering consistency and predictability for staff and students										
6. Determine and implement high impact strategies for staff wellness and sustainability										
<b>B. School Culture/Family Engagement</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Reintroduce and reinvigorate in-person events										
2. Redefine family engagement at Hilltown aligned to our current and evolving community										
3. Refine existing strategies that work and establish new ways of involving families/caregivers										
4. Reinvigorate our traditions and rituals in culturally relevant ways to bring our community together										
<b>C. Communication and Decision-making</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Map organizational decision-making processes to create clarity and transparency										
2. Revisit the idea of staff Board members being voting members										
3. Organize and update the Board Book, which contains policies related to the governance of the school										
4. Establish new ways of effectively communicating our decision making process to the community										

<b>Goal 2: Weave justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of HCCPS</b>										
<b>A. Develop a clear progression and integration of JEDI goals in the curriculum K-8 including parity between grade level partners</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Respond to Equity Audit curricular-related recommendations										
2. Formally document relevant areas of the curriculum and establish cycles of implementation review and updating										
3. Include all relevant co-curricular activities										
4. Include JEDI in the HCCPS Community Compact										
<b>B. Evaluate and revise school-wide structures to integrate JEDI purpose and language</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Respond to Equity Audit administrative-related recommendations										
2. Ensure JEDI responsibilities are embedded in all job descriptions										
3. Decide on a number of defined JEDI events per year: staff trainings, board trainings, community events, student events										
4. Design community building to be meaningful for English Learners										
<b>C. Evaluate and revise Board of Trustees structures to integrate JEDI purpose, language</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Respond to Equity Audit Board-related recommendations										
2. Clearly articulate JEDI work in Board Member responsibilities										
3. Actively work to increase Board diversity, specifically in community member representation										
4. Communicate structures to the school: clearly defined roles, jobs, committees with clearly defined responsibilities										
5. Create a JEDI mission statement (e.g., anti-racism statement) that clearly defines what JEDI ideally looks like, and what is encompassed in JEDI at Hilltown										
<b>D. Achieve enrollment parity with our sending districts</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Increase admissions access to Hilltown for all students in Hampshire and Franklin Counties										
2. Create a more robust recruitment process with specific strategies for historically underserved populations that are underrepresented at Hilltown										

3. Investigate and make recommendations regarding transportation options in Hampshire and Franklin Counties										
4. Evaluate before- and after-school programs with an eye toward serving the needs of a more diverse student population										

<b>Goal 3: Align schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence that meets the developmental needs of our students</b>										
<b>A. Evaluate the academic strengths and needs of our students, and identify detailed goals and implementation plans to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our vision and priorities</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Define what an excellent arts-integrated academic program and culture looks like that matches the vision of our school and developmental and learning needs of students										
2. Conduct a data “deep dive” to identify where we are excelling towards this vision and where we need to improve (e.g., student outcomes, curriculum and instruction)										
3. Identify top priority areas for focused work, including structures and academics. Consider how our structures (i.e., grade levels, course offerings, groupings, etc.) advance our priorities, and where they create barriers										
<b>B. Examine alternative mixed-grade classroom reconfigurations and establish a final plan and implementation steps if change is recommended</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Engage the Education Domain in a comprehensive review										
2. Obtain feedback from caregivers										
3. Develop a draft approach and action plan and criteria for success										
<b>C. Consider realignment of the school day to better meet the needs of the community</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>		<b>2024-2025</b>		<b>2025-2026</b>		<b>2026-2027</b>		<b>2027-2028</b>	
1. Examine the impact of how we use time and the supplemental care we provide on our community including the impacts of half days and possible solutions to maintain staff collaboration time and enrich the student experience										
2. Determine innovative strategies to better meet the needs of our community with our schedule including the feasibility and impact of before and after care on access to and retention in our program										
3. Determine if the length of the day would change if we went to five full days										



# Long Range Plan Progress Summary

Board of Trustees Update March 2026

## Overview

The 2023–2028 Long Range Plan included 45 total milestones across three strategic goals related to school culture, equity, and academic systems.

As of March 2026, progress estimates are as follows:

- 58% (26 milestones) are complete
- 22% (10 milestones) require revision
- 20% (9 milestones) should continue generally as written

**Key takeaway: 80% of the plan is either complete or requires revision.** About 20% of the plan represents work that should continue.

Most of the original work has either been accomplished or needs revision to align to current realities. This reflects both the progress the school has made and that plan development began in 2021 during the transition out of the pandemic, under two prior leadership teams and structures, and with a significantly different staff composition.

**As a result, much of the remaining work is best addressed through a refreshed planning process rather than incremental updates to the existing plan.**

---

## Progress by Goal

### Goal 1: Cultivate a Vibrant Culture and Community

#### Accomplishments

- A. Expanded behavioral and social-emotional support staffing to better address student needs.
- B. Developed a whole-school schedule designed to provide greater consistency and predictability for students and staff.
- C. Reintroduced in-person community events following the pandemic.
- D. Initiated work to clarify governance and communication structures, including revisiting the role of staff representation on the Board and updating the Board Book.

#### To Be Continued

- A. Honing a shared vision for the social-emotional learning and monitoring approach.
- B. Refining the scope and sequence of the SEL curriculum.
- C. Strengthening communication with the community regarding decision-making processes.

#### Recommended Adjustments / Revisions

- A. Integrate staff wellness and sustainability into organizational decision-making, policies, and operational systems rather than addressing it as a stand-alone initiative.
- B. Refine traditions and rituals to ensure cultural relevance reflective of the current community.



- C. Continue strengthening transparency , communication and shared leadership structures to support clearer organizational decision-making processes.
- 

## **Goal 2: Weave Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion into the Fabric of HCCPS**

### Accomplishments

- A. Responded to Equity Audit recommendations for curriculum, administration, Board governance.
- B. Established JEDI expectations within Board member roles and responsibilities.
- C. Created a JEDI mission/anti-racism statement defining what JEDI work means at Hilltown.
- D. Progress toward increased Board diversity, clarifying governance structures, roles, committees.

### To Be Continued/Restarted

- A. Embed JEDI responsibilities across job descriptions and staff roles.
- B. Recruitment strategies focused on increasing access to historically underserved populations within the school's primary sending districts.
- C. Reviewing and strengthening before- and after-school programming to ensure it supports the needs of our student population and those we intend to recruit.

### Recommended Adjustments / Revisions

- A. Shift equity and access focus to strengthening representation from HCCPS's primary sending districts rather than expanding geographically to Franklin County.
  - B. Focus on effective selection and implementation support for JEDI-aligned curricular materials rather than content review cycles.
  - C. Integrate JEDI principles across all events and activities rather than as separate initiatives.
  - D. Revisit the Community Compact after family engagement has been clarified and strengthened.
  - E. Focus efforts around English Learners on recruitment first, aligned with enrollment parity.
- 

## **Goal 3: Align Schoolwide Systems and Structures to a Shared Vision of Excellence**

### Accomplishments

- A. Completed a comprehensive review of mixed-grade classroom configurations
- B. Implemented a revised model following community and educator input.
- C. Conducted a review of the school schedule
- D. Implemented changes to better support student experience, staff collaboration time, and community needs.

### Recommended Adjustments / Revisions

- A. Revisit development of the vision for an excellent arts-integrated academic program.
- B. Conduct a renewed analysis of student outcomes and current practices.
- C. Integrate this work into the next strategic planning process to ensure alignment with current leadership priorities and organizational structures.

HCCPS 2023-2028 Long Range Plan Summary and Progress	LRP PROGRESS SUMMARY - 45 Total Milestones		
	COMPLETE	REVISE	CONTINUE
	58%	22%	20%
	26	10	9
<b>Goal 1: Cultivate a vibrant culture and community</b>			
<b>A. Social and Emotional Supports</b>	30% Complete	20% revise	50% Continue
1. Confirm our shared vision of an excellent SEL approach, identify where we are now and what it will take to close the gap	Continue these in context of the larger school visioning and setting a new LRP		
2. Develop an action and monitoring plan for reaching our vision with clear indicators for success (data, look-fors)	Continue		
3. Refine the scope and sequence of our SEL curriculum and approach	Continue		
4. Enhance personnel resources to address behavioral needs of students	Complete		
5. Develop and refine a whole-school schedule centered on offering consistency and predictability for staff and students	Complete		
6. Determine and implement high impact strategies for staff wellness and sustainability	Revise: Integrate staff sustainability into decision-making, policies, procedures		
<b>B. School Culture/Family Engagement</b>	75% Complete	25% Revising	
1. Reintroduce and reinvigorate in-person events	Complete		
2. Redefine family engagement at Hilltown aligned to our current and evolving community	Complete		
3. Refine existing strategies that work and establish new ways of involving families/caregivers	Complete		
4. Reinvigorate our traditions and rituals in culturally relevant ways to bring our community together	Revise: Review and refine traditions for cultural relevance. Equity Committee leads?		
<b>C. Communication and Decision-making</b>	50% Complete	25% Revise	25% Continue
1. Map organizational decision-making processes to create clarity and transparency	Revise: Integrate clarity, transparency shared leadership into school systems and structures		
2. Revisit the idea of staff Board members being voting members	Complete		
3. Organize and update the Board Book, which contains policies related to the governance of the school	In progress on track		
4. Establish new ways of effectively communicating our decision making process to the community	Continue		
<b>Goal 2: Weave justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of HCCPS</b>			
<b>A. Develop a clear progression and integration of JEDI goals in the curriculum K-8 including parity between grade level partners</b>	25% Complete	50% Revise	25% Continue
1. Respond to Equity Audit curricular-related recommendations	Complete		
2. Formally document relevant areas of the curriculum and establish cycles of implementation review and updating	Revise: Focus on implementation. Adopted JEDI-embedded curriculum, Civic Action work - see faculty and student survey feedback.		
3. Include all relevant co-curricular activities	Continue		
4. Include JEDI in the HCCPS Community Compact	Revise: Redefine family engagement first and revisit the compact entirely		
<b>B. Evaluate and revise school-wide structures to integrate JEDI purpose and language</b>	25% Complete	50% Revise	25% Continue
1. Respond to Equity Audit administrative-related recommendations	Complete		
2. Ensure JEDI responsibilities are embedded in all job descriptions	Continue		
3. Decide on a number of defined JEDI events per year: staff trainings, board trainings, community events, student events	Revise		

4. Design community building to be meaningful for English Learners	Revise/Not relevant		
<b>C. Evaluate and revise Board of Trustees structures to integrate JEDI purpose, language</b>	<b>100% Complete by EOY 2026</b>		
1. Respond to Equity Audit Board-related recommendations	Complete		
2. Clearly articulate JEDI work in Board Member responsibilities	Complete		
3. Actively work to increase Board diversity, specifically in community member representation	In progress on track		
4. Communicate structures to the school: clearly defined roles, jobs, committees with clearly defined responsibilities	In progress on track		
5. Create a JEDI mission statement that clearly defines what JEDI ideally looks like, and what is encompassed in JEDI at Hilltown	Complete		
<b>D. Achieve enrollment parity with our sending districts.</b>	<b>0% Complete/25%</b>	<b>75% Revise</b>	<b>25% Continue</b>
1. Increase admissions access to Hilltown for all students in Hampshire and Franklin Counties	Revise: Franklin Cty is not relevant for equity and access - further equity work within largest sending districts is needed.		
2. Create a more robust recruitment process with specific strategies for historically underserved populations that are underrepresented at Hilltown	Continue: this has begun but more work is needed.		
3. Investigate and make recommendations regarding transportation options in Hampshire and Franklin Counties	Revise: Franklin Cty is not the right focus given the distance		
4. Evaluate before- and after-school programs with an eye toward serving the needs of a more diverse student population	Complete/Revise: Was marked DONE but needs to be re-opened.		
<b>Goal 3: Align schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence that meets the developmental needs of our students</b>			
<b>A. Evaluate the academic strengths and needs of our students, and identify detailed goals and implementation plans to align curriculum, instruction, and assessment to our vision and priorities</b>	<b>50% Complete</b>		<b>50% Continue</b>
1. Define what an excellent arts-integrated academic program and culture looks like that matches the vision of our school and developmental and learning needs of students	Continue/Reboot. This was started, but with leadership turnover, only some parts were addressed.		
2. Conduct a data "deep dive" to identify where we are excelling towards this vision and where we need to improve (e.g., student outcomes, curriculum and instruction)	Partially Complete - redo with new plan.		
3. Identify top priority areas for focused work, including structures and academics. Consider how our structures (i.e., grade levels, course offerings, groupings, etc.) advance our priorities, and where they create barriers	Partially Complete - Redo for new plan.		
<b>B. Examine alternative mixed-grade classroom reconfigurations and establish a final plan and implementation steps if change is recommended</b>	<b>100% Complete</b>		
1. Engage the Education Domain in a comprehensive review	Complete		
2. Obtain feedback from caregivers	Complete		
3. Work with educators to establish proposal	Complete		
4. Develop a draft approach and action plan and criteria for success	Complete		
5. Finalize plan and share with community	Complete		
6. Post new roles as relevant	Complete		
<b>C. Consider realignment of the school day to better meet the needs of the community</b>	<b>100% Complete</b>		

1. Examine the impact of how we use time and the supplemental care we provide on our community including the impacts of half days and possible solutions to maintain staff collaboration time and enrich the student experience	Complete		
2. Determine innovative strategies to better meet the needs of our community with our schedule including the feasibility and impact of before and after care on access to and retention in our program	Complete		
3. Determine if the length of the day would change if we went to five full days	Complete		



## Proposal to the Board of Trustees

**Committee making Proposal:** Board Leadership/President

**Date:** 3/11/26

**Name of Proposal:** Proposal to Establish a 2027 Long Range Planning Committee

**Priority Level:** Medium

**Approximate time needed for discussion:** 10 minutes

**Proposal to be presented by:** Lily Newman, President

**Committee members drafting proposal:** N/A

### **Proposal: Establish a 2027 Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee**

Establish a 2027 Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee by **August 31, 2026** to begin a new long-range planning process. The resulting **2027 Long Range Plan** would be shared by **August 31, 2027**, and the planning process will identify the action steps and timelines needed to guide implementation.

The 2027 LRP Committee will determine how elements of the current plan should be carried forward, revised, or concluded, and will report these recommendations to the Board.

**Rationale:** The current 2023–2028 Long Range Plan began development in 2021 as the school emerged from COVID pandemic restrictions. The work was undertaken with two prior leadership teams and organizational structures and is scheduled to continue through 2028.

By that time, the current leadership team and structure will have been in place for three years, implementing a plan that was inherited and is now approximately 80% complete or in need of revision, with only about 10% remaining clearly relevant for continuation.

In addition, more than 50% of the staff has joined the school since the plan was developed, and the plan increasingly feels disconnected from current realities. Some items previously marked complete may also need to be revisited. For example, the school may wish to reconsider before-care programming to increase equitable access to the HCCPS program and support enrollment of higher-needs populations.

The current leadership team and staff are eager to engage in planning and are well positioned to partner meaningfully with the Board of Trustees in this process. The Board also includes many new members since the plan was originally developed, creating an opportunity for both the Board and the school team to co-create and take ownership of the next plan and its implementation.

**Goals to be achieved by proposal:** Launching a new long-range planning process will enable the current HCCPS team and Board to develop the plan most needed to move the school from good to great in the years ahead, grounded in the current context and realities of the school community. The resulting plan will be owned and carried forward by the team that creates it.

**Potential problems/dissenting views:** Some may prefer to see the current plan carried through to full completion or may be concerned about a lack of a clear plan during the transition.

As a charter school, however, our Accountability Plan will continue to guide our work in the coming year. With the new LRP planning process underway as well, the school will soon be able to align all facets of its work toward a cohesive and aspirational path forward.



## Proposal to the Board of Trustees

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**Date:** 3/11/26

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**Priority Level:** Medium

**Approximate time needed for discussion:** 10 minutes

**Proposal to be presented by:** Lily Newman, President

**Committee members drafting proposal:** N/A

### **Proposal: Establish a 2027 Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee**

Establish a 2027 Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee by **September 30, 2026** to begin a new long-range planning process. The resulting **2027 Long Range Plan** would be shared by **September 30, 2027**, and the planning process will identify the action steps and timelines needed to guide implementation.

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# HCCPS Salary Scales

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March 2026



# Process

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- Historically Teacher and TA scales projected in 3 year increments
  - Allows for planning, budgeting and course correction
- Salary scales for admin staff, finance manager and directors also placed under Personnel oversight last year for consistency and transparency with one year scales and adjustments made for FY25
  - Previously under Director of Administration

# Comparables

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-Teacher/TAs and Administrative assistants were compared to equivalent roles/steps at agreed upon comparable local districts

-Director, Finance Manager, and Head of School salaries were also compared to salaries reported in the Massachusetts Charter Public Schools Compensation Benchmarking Survey in addition to data from local comparable schools/districts

# Goal

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**To reach 100% of median in regards to comparable districts for each role by FY29**

As some roles are lagging further behind the median than others, rate of annual increase will vary from role to role as opposed to a flat across the board % increase for all positions

# Teachers

Teacher's salaries startpoint range- 94%- 100% of median

## BA

STEP	% of median salaries
1	94.36%
2	94.44%
3	94.85%
4	95.23%
5	95.59%
6	95.94%
7	96.26%
8	96.33%
9	95.44%
10	97.14%
11	97.41%
12	97.46%

## MA

STEP	% of median salaries
1	98.47%
2	98.96%
3	99.42%
4	99.85%
5	100.26%
6	99.07%
7	98.30%
8	98.22%
9	98.05%
10	97.81%
11	96.56%
12	96.21%

# Teaching Assistants

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Teaching assistants startpoint range- 92%- 97% of median

STEP	% of median salaries
1	92.45%
2	93.07%
3	93.52%
4	94.69%
5	95.71%
6	97.00%
7	97.43%

# Projections for FY27-29 (Teachers/TAs)

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- Teacher annual growth rate range- 3.09-4.50%
- TA annual growth rate range-3.39-5.22%
- **Overall Teacher/TA Budget Impact**
  - FY27 Increase: \$85,714 (3.92%)
  - FY28 Increase: \$89,180 (3.92%)
  - FY29 Increase: \$92,726 (3.93%)
  - Total Three-Year Increase: \$267,620 (12.24%)

# Directors

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- Compared to same districts as teachers/TAs as well as four comparable schools from MCPSA survey
- Midpoint of Director scale at 95.3% of median
- Annual growth rate of 4.15% applied to scales to allow for midpoint to reach 100% of median in FY29
- Budget impact
  - FY27- \$15,724.96
  - FY28- \$16,865.20
  - FY29- \$18,092.87

# Administrative Assistant/Finance Manager

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- Adjustments were made last year to Finance Manager and Admin Assistant Scales
- FY26 midpoint of the Finance Manager scales at 105% of median of comparables
- FY26 Administrative Assistant steps ranging from 114-132% of median of comparables
- Proposal applies annual 2.5% COLA to these scales for FY27-29



## Head of School Compensation Proposal to the Board of Trustees

**From:** BOT Leadership- Lily Newman, Neal Teague, Tala Elia

**Date:** March 11, 2026

**Priority Level:** High

**Proposal to be presented by:** Tala Elia

### Background

The Head of School (HOS) salary was last adjusted for FY26 with the understanding that that was a single year short-term proposal and with an agreement for Board leadership to present a multi-year proposal to the BoT at the end of Jan 2026. Benchmarking data from the Massachusetts Charter School Association (MCPSA) informed compensation discussions and it was recognized that a significant increase was likely warranted based on available data and the scope and responsibility of the position.

For the current proposal cycle, updated MCPSA benchmarking data for FY26 were not available. Therefore, we rely on the FY25 MCPSA compensation data, adjusted forward using a reasonable cost-of-living assumption. Salary figures for Head of School or equivalent positions were also solicited from 5 local comparable charter schools.

Teacher and Teaching Assistant salary settlements across comparable districts last year ranged from 2%–4% COLA increases, a conservative 2.5% COLA assumption was used for projecting current median compensation levels. This is in line with the 2.5% COLA assumption when used for projecting comparable salaries for all other staff roles.

Using this approach:

- FY26 median regional HOS salary based on MCPSA data and local comparables :\$157,437.50
- Current Hilltown HOS FY26 salary (\$128,400) equals 81.56% of the FY26 median.

By comparison, Hilltown aims to maintain teacher and TA compensation at 90–110% of comparable medians, making the current HOS compensation notably below the range targeted for other professional staff.

This proposal aims to correct that gap in a fiscally responsible and predictable manner and uses similar methodology and aims employed in the current Teacher and TA salary scale proposals.



## Proposal

### 1. Salary Adjustment with goal of reaching 100% of Median by FY29

In line with salary recommendations for other Hilltown positions under consideration this year, this proposal aims to bring the Head of School compensation to the median of comparable schools over a 3 year period, reaching 100% of the median in FY29. This moves compensation toward parity with the comparative framework used for other Hilltown salary scales while remaining financially manageable within projected budgets.

### 2. Selection of Comparable Salaries

MCPSA data for HOS salaries were filtered to select for Western MA schools with student populations of less than 500 and excluding schools that were High School only. Salary figures from five local comparable charter schools were also included for a total of 12 data points.

The proposed salaries for FY27-29 are as follows:

	FY27	FY28	FY29
Proposed Salary	\$140,865	\$154,540	\$169,543
Salary as % of projected median	87%	93%	100%

## Rationale

This proposal:

- Addresses a measurable compensation gap relative to peer institutions.
- Aligns leadership compensation philosophy with equity standards applied to staff.
- Provides predictable multi-year projections to support financial planning.
- Avoids abrupt future corrections by phasing adjustment responsibly
- Supports leadership recruitment and retention stability.

Potential Concerns:



- The proposed annual percent increase is larger than those for other staff positions. Because the current HOS salary is significantly lower compared to the median benchmark of any other position on the Hilltown staff, larger adjustments are needed to close the gap.
- Only charter school comparables were used as opposed to district comparables. HOS or equivalent roles were felt to be a more accurate comparable of the role than a superintendent overseeing multiple schools. Additionally, district superintendent salaries were reviewed and the median would place the Hilltown HOS salary at 71% of the median implying a substantially larger adjustment and budget impact.

# FY27 Budget Context for Salary Scale Proposal

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

**Chris Kusek**

March 2026



## Purpose



Provide financial context for the FY27 salary scale proposal



Review revenue and staffing trends



Explain assumptions in the FY27 draft budget



Connect staffing investment to Hilltown's mission

# State Tuition Revenue Trend

State tuition revenue has grown steadily over the past four years.

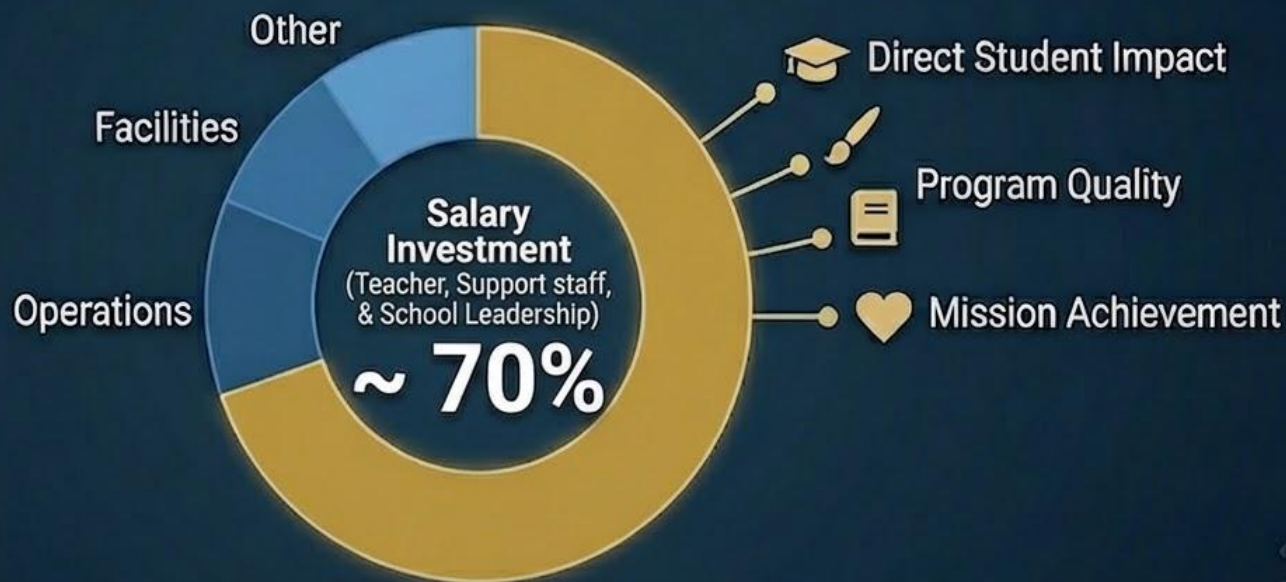
- • FY24–FY27 projected increase: **\$705K (+19.8%)**
- • Growth has provided capacity for program expansion and staffing investments
- • Tuition revenue remains the primary driver of Hilltown's operating budget



**Key takeaway:** Stable revenue growth has allowed Hilltown to strategically invest in staff and student programming.

# Salary Spending as % of Tuition

Strategic investment in our educators directly supports student success and our mission.



**Key takeaway:** Our significant investment in personnel reflects our commitment to high-quality education and student support services.

# Instructional Staffing Salaries

Investment has focused on professional staff who directly support teaching and learning.



## Drivers of increase



Drama Teacher



School Psychologist



OT



Math Specialist



SLP



Director of Student Support

Paraprofessional costs have remained stable or slightly decreased, offsetting some personnel growth.

**Key takeaway:** Hilltown has prioritized instructional staff and student support services.

# Strategic Investment in Staff

Hilltown's educational model depends on talented educators and strong student support systems.



Hilltown's educational model depends on talented educators and strong student support systems.



Recent investments expanded arts programming and student services.



Added School Psychologist, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Language Pathology.







Strengthens inclusive education and supports Hilltown's mission.

**Key takeaway:** Strategic investments in staff are crucial for reducing class sizes, expanding specialist roles, and providing comprehensive student support, directly enhancing the educational experience and mission.

# FY27 Budget Assumptions & Snapshot

## FY27 Budget Assumptions

-  DESE projected FY27 tuition increase
-  10% health insurance increase based on current census
-  3% inflation applied to occupancy, services, and supplies
-  First year of three-year salary scale phase-in

## FY27 Draft Budget Snapshot

Projected Revenue: **\$4.51M**

Projected Expenses: **\$4.59M**

Projected Operating Result:  
**-\$80,438** (~1.8% of budget)

This is a manageable gap that schools often address through normal budget planning.

**Key takeaway:** The proposed salary scales reflect strategic investments in staff while maintaining fiscal responsibility that can be addressed through planning and implementation.



## Proposal to the Board of Trustees

**From: GABS**

**Date:** March 11, 2026

**Name of Proposal: Proposal to Submit Updated Bylaws to the Cooperative and Commissioner for Approval**

**Priority Level: High**

**Approximate time needed for discussion: 10 minutes**

**Proposal to be presented by: Kathleen Hulton**

**Committee members drafting proposal: , Kathleen Hulton, Emily Boddy**

### **Text of Proposal:**

This proposal moves to Submit the updated Bylaws to the HCCPS Cooperative for review and vote at the ANnual Meeting on March 25, 2026, followed by their submission to the **Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education** for approval.

### **Goals to be achieved by proposal:**

The goal of this proposal is to have draft bylaw updates ready to present to the Cooperative for a vote at the Annual Meeting on March 25, 2026.

This proposal and the bylaw updates it advances also ensures that governance policies and practices are current, legally compliant, and clear for all stakeholders.

### **Potential problems / dissenting views:**

Some may question whether some procedural changes (like the addition of administrator participation guidelines) require further consideration. However, these updates reflect best practices, match the current leadership structure of our school, and clarify already-existing authority without changing the balance of power or operational control.

Some Board members might like to discuss potential alternative definitions of quorum before changing the definition of quorum in our bylaws. The proposed new definition of quorum has been confirmed with DESE several times over the course of several years.

**Additional notes:**

In accordance with our bylaws, new bylaws are approved by The Cooperative, not the Board. We are not voting to approve these bylaws, but to advance them as proposed bylaw updates to be voted on by the Cooperative at the Annual Meeting, and contingent on their approval, submitted to the Commissioner for approval.

Note: These proposed bylaw changes need to be distributed to the Cooperative at least seven days prior to the Annual meeting.

# Purpose of the Climate Survey

## Student School Climate Survey (Grades 5–8)

### Narrative

Annual survey of students in grades 5–8



- Relationships with teachers



- Fairness and trust



- Belonging and respect



- Safety across the school



Used to monitor longitudinal trends in school climate

### Takeaway

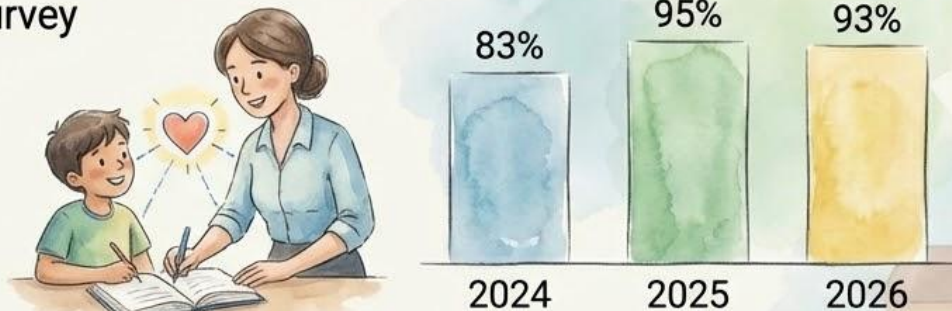
Climate survey results remain broadly positive and provide important signals about both strengths and areas for continued attention.

# A Clear Strength: Student–Teacher Relationships

## Narrative

One of the clearest strengths in the survey data is the quality of student-teacher relationships. Across all three years, students report very strong levels of feeling cared for by teachers. Trust in teachers also improved meaningfully from 2024 to 2025 and remained substantially above the 2024 baseline in 2026. This is an important signal of school climate, since strong adult relationships are foundational to belonging, engagement, and support.

## Visual: % Agree / Strongly Agree



Indicator: Most or all of my teachers care about me.



## Key Takeaway

Students overwhelmingly report that teachers care about them, and trust in teachers remains well above the 2024 baseline.

# A Notable Strength in 2026: Trusted Adults and Classroom Safety

## Narrative

The 2026 data shows especially encouraging results in two areas: trusted adult relationships and classroom safety.

The percentage of students reporting that they have at least one adult at Hilltown they trust and can go to for advice increased substantially over time. Students' sense of safety in classes also shows a steady upward trend across the three years.

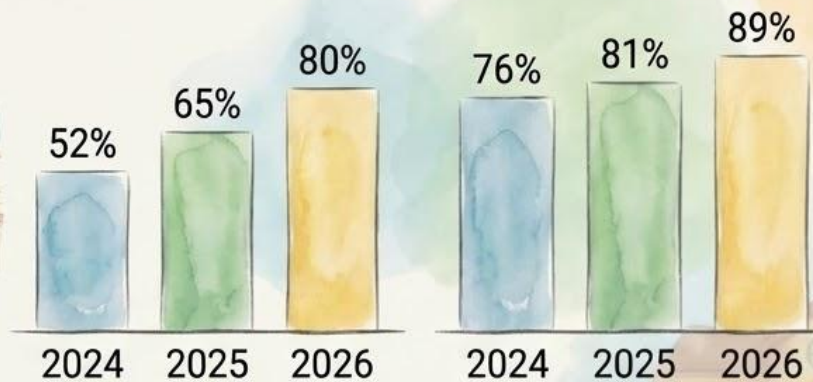
These results reinforce the broader picture that adult relationships are a core strength of the Hilltown experience.



## Visual: % Agree / Strongly Agree

Trusted adult

Classroom safety



Indicators: There is at least one adult at Hilltown whom I trust and can go to for advice (Yes) / I feel safe in my classes (Very Often / Always)



## Key Takeaway

By 2026, more students reported both having a trusted adult at school and feeling safe in class than in either prior year.

# Continued Growth Area: Peer Belonging and Respect

## Narrative

The data suggests that students generally feel connected at Hilltown, but peer culture is still somewhat less positive than adult relationship indicators. This is especially visible in items related to belonging and students respecting one another's differences.

## How We Can Address This



Continue explicit work on peer culture and inclusion



Build on affinity groups, circles, and belonging structures

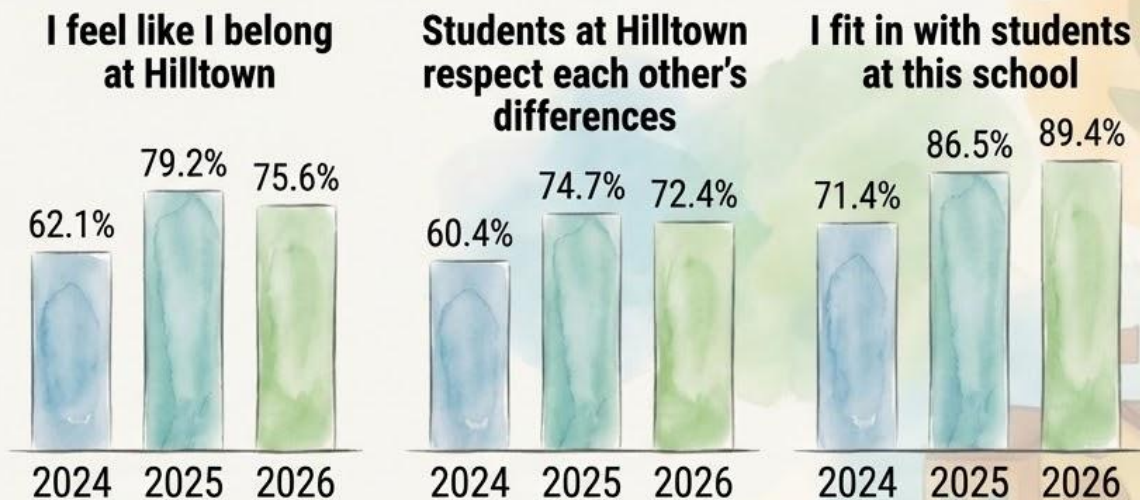


Support students in navigating conflict and difference respectfully



Continue emphasizing student leadership and community responsibility

## Visual: % Agree / Strongly Agree



## Key Takeaway

Belonging is improving, and peer respect remains an area where continued work can deepen the student experience.

# Area for Continued Growth: Fairness and Peer Respect

## Narrative

While most climate indicators are positive, two results suggest a continued need for attention: student perceptions of fairness and whether self differences. Both areas improved meaningfully from 2024 to 2025, but **remained lower than many of another's differences.**

## How We Can Address This



Continue strengthening restorative practices



Reinforce clear, consistent behavior expectations



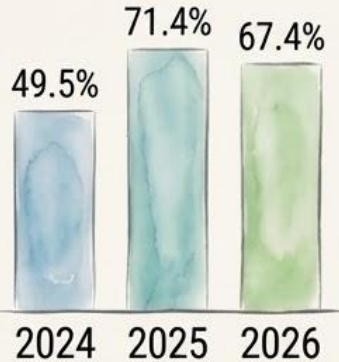
Expand structures for students conflict and difference respectfully



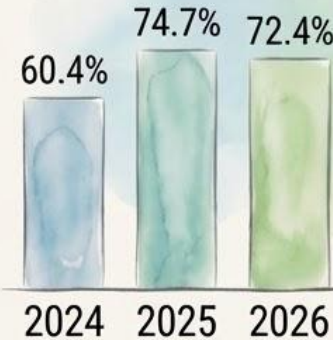
Continue community-buildient leadership and community responsibility

## Visual: % Agree / Strongly Agree

My teachers treat students fairly



Students at Hilltown respect each other's differences



## Key Takeaway

Fairness and peer respect have improved since 2024, but remain areas where continued attention could strengthen overall school climate.

# Final Slide: 2026 Climate Survey: Key Takeaways

## Narrative

The 2026 climate survey reflects a school community where students report strong relationships with teachers and a positive classroom experience. Students overwhelmingly report that teachers care about them, encourage them to work hard, and support their participation in class. These indicators remain among the strongest results in the survey and continue to reflect the relational culture that is central to Hilltown.

The survey also shows that a large majority of students feel a sense of belonging at Hilltown and report fitting in with other students at school. At the same time, the data suggests that there are opportunities to continue strengthening peer culture consistency of student experience, particularly in areas like peer culture.

## What the 2026 Data Suggests



**Strong student-teacher relationships:** Students report very high levels of teacher care, encouragement, and support in learning.



**Positive classroom climate:** Students generally feel comfortable participating and engaging in class.



**Strong but still developing sense of belonging:** Most students report feeling that they belong at Hilltown and fit in with peers.



**Continued opportunity to strengthen peer culture:** Fairness and peer interactions remain areas where ongoing work can further improve the student experience.



## Closing Takeaway

Overall, the 2026 survey reflects a school community with strong adult relationships, a supportive classroom environment, and clear opportunities to continue strengthening peer culture and belonging.



*Note: The school logo and header have been updated to reflect current branding. No substantive changes have been made to the mission or purpose of the school  
Section titles have been added throughout the bylaws for consistency and ease of reference. No substantive changes to content or ordering have been made.*

The mission of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is:

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

## **ARTICLE I            Name, Purpose, and Location**

### Sec. 1            Name

The name by which this organization shall be known is the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School ("School").

### Sec. 2            Purpose

The purpose of the School shall be as described in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Charter to operate a public school as executed by the Massachusetts Secretary of Education and granted to the School on December 9, 1994. This public school is chartered by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and operates in compliance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89.

### Sec. 3            Location

The principal office of the School in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts shall, until changed in accordance with the By-laws of the School, be located at 1 Industrial Parkway, Easthampton, MA 01027.

## **ARTICLE II            Membership**

### Sec. 1            Definition of Members

Any parent/legal guardian or staff member directly involved with the School community is defined as a member of the Cooperative with full voting rights. Other adult volunteers who have contributed forty hours of work over a twelve-month period are also considered members with full voting rights.

### Sec. 2            Rights of Members

All members are welcome to attend special and annual meetings of the School and shall have the right to vote at all special and annual general meetings of the School, except where recusal is required by law.

### Sec.3            Board Authority on Membership

The Board of Trustees shall be empowered to interpret and enforce the membership requirements described in Section 1 of this Article.

## **ARTICLE III           Meetings of Members**

### Sec. 1            Annual Meeting

The School shall hold an annual meeting at which the members of the Cooperative will: elect new trustees; vote on proposed By-law amendments; hear reports from the Board of Trustees; and discuss other relevant business. The annual meeting shall be held in the spring.

### Sec. 2            Special Meeting

A special meeting of the members may be called at any time by a majority of the Board of Trustees. The Clerk or some other officer shall also call a special meeting of the members, upon written application of ten percent of the members. Any such call shall state the time, place, and purposes of the meeting. Any and all By-laws can be amended at a special meeting.

### Sec.3            Meeting Notice

Notice of the time, place, and purposes of any annual or special meeting of the members shall be given in person or in writing in accordance with Article IX of these By-laws at least seven days before such meeting.

### Sec. 4            Voting Requirements

At an annual meeting or a special meeting, if notice has been properly

given in accordance with Article III, Section 3 and Article IX of these By-laws, sixty percent of the votes cast shall be necessary and sufficient for the election to any office or for the decision of any questions brought before the meeting, except as otherwise provided in these By-laws or the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **ARTICLE IV            Board of Trustees**

### Sec. 1            Board of Trustees: Roles, Responsibilities, and Authority

1. The governing body of the School shall be called the Board of Trustees ("Board of Trustees" or "Board"). Said Board holds the charter from the Commonwealth and is therefore responsible for ensuring that the School and Board members comply with all applicable laws and regulations. It shall be jointly responsible for all action taken on behalf of the School. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the overall well-being of the organization: fiscal management, approval of the annual budget, fundraising, organizational, and personnel policies. It shall ensure that the school is an academic success, organizationally viable, faithful to the terms of its charter, and earns charter renewal. The Board shall approve all general policy decisions. The Board of Trustees will not exercise managerial powers over the day-to-day operations of the School. **The Board of Trustees oversees the Head of School, who manages the day-to-day operations of the School.**
2. The Board of Trustees will ensure that the School operates in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, including, but not limited to:
  - a. Successfully completing the opening procedures process in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89; 603 CMR § 1.00; and any guidelines issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
  - b. Successfully completing the opening procedures process in accordance with M.G.L. c. 71, § 89; 603 CMR § 1.00; and any guidelines issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
  - c. Requesting the Commissioner's appointment of any new trustees and receiving that approval prior to any new trustees beginning their service as members;
  - d. Submitting timely annual reports;
  - e. Submitting timely annual independent audits;
  - f. Hiring, evaluating, and removing, if necessary, personnel to manage the School's day-to-day operations and holding these administrators accountable for meeting specified goals;
  - g. Approving and monitoring progress towards meeting the goals of the

School's Accountability Plan;

- h. Adopting and revising School policies, including plans for student recruitment and retention;
  - i. Responding to complaints in writing as required by 603 CMR § 1.09; and
  - j. Ensuring that members of the Board receive an orientation and training regarding their duties and obligations as members of a board of trustees.
  - k. The board of trustees of a charter school is a public entity, which operates independently of any school committee. The Board of Trustees is a public employer for the purposes of tort liability under M.G.L. c. 258 and for collective bargaining purposes under M.G.L. c. 150E.
3. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the selection, appointment, evaluation, and/or removal of the Head of School.

Board members must serve the School with duty, loyalty, and care, striving to miss no more than two regularly scheduled Board of Trustees meetings in a given Fiscal Year.

4. Board members shall be responsible for determining general School policies while maintaining compliance with state and federal law.
5. The Board of Trustees forms committees and/or task forces, either permanent or as needed. Board members shall define the purposes, duties, and particular powers for each committee and approve these by way of consensus. Committees can be composed of trustee and non-trustee members.
6. Grievances may be brought to the Board of Trustees using the three-level Grievance Procedure ("Grievance Procedure (Staff)" or "Grievance Procedure (Students and/or Parents)," whichever is applicable).

## Sec. 2            Composition, Membership, Terms, and Eligibility of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is a public entity, which shall be composed of six to fifteen voting members. Parents/legal guardians of students shall fill at least two positions, and ideally not more than two-thirds. Membership in the Cooperative is not a prerequisite to serve on the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will exercise due diligence in assessing the suitability of candidates for Board membership with respect to potential conflicts of interest and areas of skill and expertise that will be of value to the Board of Trustees, such due diligence to occur prior to a vote by the Board of Trustees to request the Commissioner appoint the proposed

member(s). Prior to submitting a candidate to the Commissioner for approval, the Board of Trustees must determine that no financial interests under M.G.L. c. 268A exist that may preclude a majority of the Board of Trustees from participating in deliberations or voting on certain matters within the scope of the Board of Trustees' authority.

New members of the Board of Trustees shall be elected every year as necessary for a three-year term by a vote of sixty percent majority of the voting members of the School attending the annual meeting. Community members (non-parents/legal guardians) may choose instead to serve a first term of two years and may choose instead to serve one year for subsequent terms. The Board of Trustees will then hold a formal vote to accept all new members, as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The total number of sequential years a member may serve is six; the total number of years a member may serve is twelve.

Between annual meetings, the Board of Trustees shall be empowered to elect by quorum of the Board new trustees to fill any vacancies on the Board. At the next annual meeting, the Cooperative membership will vote on whether the newly appointed trustee(s) will complete the remainder of their term(s).

Permanent employees of the school shall be disqualified from serving as voting members of the Board of Trustees during their time of employment. ~~All Domain Council Administrators shall attend and fully participate in Board of Trustee meetings, but not vote~~

**The Head of School shall attend and fully participate in Board of Trustees meetings, but not vote.**

**Other administrators may participate in Board meetings with prior notice to the Head of School and at the discretion of the Board President.**

Using standard election process, up to two permanent employees may be elected to the Board of Trustees as non-voting, ex-officio members for two-year terms and may choose to renew for an additional one-year term. The total number of sequential years a permanent employee member may serve is three; the total number of years a permanent employee member may serve is six.

Individual members of the Board of Trustees are considered special public employees of the Commonwealth.

Trustees will not participate in any decision that may result in their financial gain. They must recuse themselves from discussion about such decisions, save to provide factual information about the issue. Any trustee who gains financially from the School shall disclose

this to the Board, and in accordance with Massachusetts law. Board members may not receive payment for services. Members of the Board of Trustees will comply with the Commonwealth's ethics requirements, including, but not limited to, meeting all training requirements; complying with M.G.L. c. 268A, the conflict of interest law; filing all required disclosures under M.G.L. c. 268A; and filing all statements of financial interest in a timely fashion as required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(u). Failure to comply with the Commonwealth's ethics requirements may result in removal of individual Board members by the Board of Trustees or by the Commissioner. See M.G.L. c. 71, § 89(u); 603 C.M.R. § 106(2)(e).

No more than one partner or household member of any immediate family shall serve as a trustee of the School or a member of the same Board committee at a given time.

The Board of Trustees may not discriminate against potential members on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, national origin, ancestry, religion, marital status, gender identity, or non-disqualifying handicap or mental condition.

### **Sec. 3 Meeting Requirements**

Board of Trustees and its committees, irrespective of what the title may be, will comply in all respects with the open meeting law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25, and the regulations, guidance, and directives of the Office of the Attorney General. This includes, but is not limited to, training, notice of meetings, records of meetings, and executive sessions.

A member of the Board of Trustees may participate remotely in a meeting provided that such participation complies with the requirements of 940 C.M.R. § 29.10, including, but not limited to, meeting the permissible reasons for remote participation. Board member remote participation must be approved in advance by the Clerk.

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least quarterly, within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

### **Sec. 4 Quorum**

~~More than fifty percent of the total number of the voting members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum~~

**A majority of the total number of seated members of the Board of Trustees, as approved by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, shall constitute a quorum.**

### **Sec. 5 Decision-Making**

Decisions of the Board of Trustees shall be made by consensus. In the event that a decision

cannot be reached by consensus, or when a vote is legally required, a vote will be called. A two-thirds majority **of voting members present will** be necessary for the final decision

1. Decisions of the Board of Trustees shall be made by consensus of a quorum of seated members whenever possible. When consensus cannot be reached after reasonable discussion, the Board may act by majority vote of those present and voting, provided a quorum is present.
2. For purposes of this section, consensus means a general agreement among members present such that no member present objects to the decision moving forward. Members may indicate support, neutrality, or willingness to stand aside.
3. If a formal vote is required, the Chair shall call for the vote and the outcome shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.

## **ARTICLE V Officers**

### Sec. 1 Officer Positions

The officers shall be a President, Vice-President, Clerk, and Treasurer and such other officers as the Board of Trustees may ~~in its discretion~~ **elect**. The President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Clerk shall be elected annually by the Board of Trustees at its first meeting after its election by the ~~members~~ **Cooperative**.

### Sec. 2 Duties of Officers

- **President:** The role of the President of the Board of Trustees is to ~~be a link of communication between the Board of Trustees and the Head of School, the Director of Teacher and Learning, and the Coordinator of Community and Family Engagement, to oversee committee work, facilitate communication within the Board of Trustees, sit on Domain Council, and set the agenda for the Board of Trustees' meetings~~ **facilitate Board operations, set agendas, oversee committees, and act as primary liaison with the Head of School.**
- **Vice-President:** The role of the Vice-President of the Board of Trustees is to assist the President in carrying out the President's responsibilities as needed.
- **Treasurer:** The role of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees is to sign official

documents and checks and to monitor and provide support and assistance to the Head of School on financial matters. The Treasurer shall chair finance committee meetings and present financial reports to the Board of Trustees.

- **Clerk:** The role of the Clerk of the Board of Trustees is to comply with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education reporting requirements of the Board of Trustees **and to ensure accurate recordkeeping and compliance with all reporting requirements.**

### **Sec. 3            Vacancies**

Any vacant officer position shall be elected by a quorum of ~~the Board of Trustees~~ **voting members of the Board of Trustees.**

## **ARTICLE VI            Resignations, Removals**

Sec. 1            Resignations: Any trustee or officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the President or Clerk. Such resignation shall take effect at the time designated therein, or if no time be specified, then upon its acceptance by the Board of Trustees.

Sec. 2            Removals: At any meeting called for the purpose, the members of the Cooperative may, by vote of sixty percent majority of the members of the Cooperative present, suggest removal of any trustee from office. The Board of Trustees must ratify by formal vote the suggested removal. If the removal is not ratified by the Board of Trustees, the trustee, in question, will remain in office. The Board of Trustees may, by vote of a majority of the trustees then in office, remove from office any officer who has been elected or appointed by the Board of Trustees, with or without cause being shown, and if cause being shown, may remove a Board officer.

## **ARTICLE VII            Liability**

No member of the School, employee, or member of the Board of Trustees shall have the power to bind any other member of the School personally. All persons or corporations extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claims against the School shall look only to funds and property of the School for payment so that any

of said members, employees, or members of the Board of Trustees, present or future, shall not be personally liable.

#### **ARTICLE VIII      Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the School will begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

#### **ARTICLE IX      Notices**

Notices are distributed electronically unless otherwise required. When notices are sent by mail, they shall be directed to a member, trustee, or officer at their address as it appears on the records of the School, unless such member, trustee, or officer shall have filed with the Clerk a written request that such notices intended for them be directed to some other address, in which case, it shall be directed to the address designated in such request.

#### **ARTICLE X      Amendment of By-Laws**

Amendments to the By-laws may be proposed by the Board, a Board committee, or any member of the ~~School~~ **Cooperative** at both the special meetings and the annual meeting. Any proposed amendment must be submitted in written form ~~duplicate~~, and circulated to the membership at least seven days in advance of the meeting. Any proposed amendments must be seconded.

Amendments to the By-laws shall be approved by a sixty percent majority of the members of the School Cooperative attending the annual meeting, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Draft



## Finance Committee Minutes

<b>Group:</b> Finance Committee	<b>Date and time:</b> Wed., January 28, 2026 9:00 am
<b>Location/Link:</b> <a href="https://meet.google.com/ytq-mjoj-rpt">https://meet.google.com/ytq-mjoj-rpt</a>	
<p><b>Agenda:</b></p> <p><b>Attendees:</b> Chris Kusek, Carla Clark, Lisa Plaza, Andrew Tilbe, Grace Mrowicki, Kylan Mandile <b>Regrets:</b> None</p> <p><b>Minutes:</b> Andrew motions to approve November 2025 meeting minutes, Carla seconds, minutes approved by consensus. <b>ACTION:</b> Kylan to send approved minutes for inclusion in BoT packet</p> <p><b>Revised FY2026 Budget:</b> The budget increased due to tuition increase from the state. Our costs have also increased: (i) director line item increased because we hired another director (ii) our contactor line item is up this year because (\$12k was from work done in FY 2025 out of the \$95k surplus). Our contractor line item (iii) SPED went up from \$25k to \$50k but will likely go back down to \$35k next year BCBA (iv) We switched to a more comprehensive maintenance and repair company. Work will be done in the spring, particularly on sprinkler system. (v) Kylan motions to recommend revised budget be sent to BOT for approval, Grace seconds. <b>ACTION:</b> Chris to obtain sprinkler repair quote once sprinkler company conducts study and provides quote. Kylan to send revised</p> <p><b>Fund Transfer Proposal:</b> Kylan motions to approve, Andy seconds. Unanimously approved. <b>ACTION:</b> Kylan to remove "DRAFT" and send to BOT for recommendation.</p> <p><b>FY2026 Q2 Financials:</b> Reviewed and discussed by committee. <b>ACTION:</b> Kylan to send Q2 financials to BOT for inclusion in board packet for their review and approval.</p> <p><b>Fiscal Policy:</b> Chris and Carla presented Kylan motions to approve with the note that the credit card section be updated so that credit card is in the name of the Finance Manager and approval of statements is the Head of School., Lisa seconds, motion approved by consensus. <b>ACTION:</b> Kylan to send Fiscal Policy to BOT for their approval.</p> <p><b>Long Range Capital Plan:</b> Discussed during review of revised FY2026 budget. To be further addressed at next committee meeting.</p> <p><b>New Business:</b> Capital repairs</p> <p><b>Reviewed action items.</b></p> <p><b>Next meeting:</b> February 25, 2026</p> <p><b>Adjourned:</b> at 10:04am</p>	