

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 6:30 pm

Location: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School, 1 Industrial Drive, Easthampton, MA

- Present:** Tim Reynolds, Lara Ramsey, Dan Klatz, Paula Ingram, Joe Wyman, Noelle Barrist Stern, Deirdre Arthen, Liz Preston, Kelly Woods, Rich Senecal, Dawn Reesman, Matt Dube
- Regrets:** Karen Sise
- Facilitator:** Tim
- Notetaker:** Noelle
- Guests:** Kate Saccento, Amy Reesman, Alec MacLachlan, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Gina Wyman, Marguerite Durant
- List keeper:** Matt
- Timekeeper:** Paula
- Mission statement read by:** Tim

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Announcements/ Appreciations/ Acknowledgements	<u>Announcements:</u> None <u>Appreciations/Acknowledgements:</u> Tim acknowledged all those who contributed to the Coffee House, which was a great success and thanked the Prisms and their family members. Dawn appreciated the teachers for attending the HCCPS Open House on a weekend. It was also a success.	
Any thank you notes needed?	None	
BOT Visibility this month?	Family Bingo Night	BOT members are encouraged to attend and wear BOT buttons.

Minutes		Liz moved to approve the minutes; Joe seconded; the BOT approved the minutes by consensus.
Public Comment Period	None	
Board Recruitment (GABS)	Deirdre said that we have had some interest in the BOT, but not a lot of follow up from those interested. She asked if BOT members would reach out to people who might be interested. Lara suggested that it would be great to reach out to the community for community BOT members, but said it would be helpful to identify what type of skills we are looking for. Tim asked if we could have something in the BOT packet about when terms expire, even if that is not when BOT members are actually leaving. Deirdre said that we currently have strength on the Personnel and Finance Committees. Margeurite suggested that we approach community members from some of the groups HCCPS already has connections with, such as Arcadia. Rebecca suggested it would be helpful to have someone from the Easthampton Public Schools.	
Revised Budget	Dan presented the revised budget. He explained that the income line is up since June 2019. The expenses are mostly consistent with what was expected. One exception is a Paid Family Medical Leave Act tax that was recently enacted. Right now, the budget shows a \$25,876 surplus. The surplus will be left in place for now, rather than spent, because there are not currently unmet needs.	Tim moved to approve the proposed revised budget; Matt seconded; the revised proposed budget was approved by consensus. Joe abstained.
Hiring Process (Proposal from Personnel)	Kelly went through the Personnel Committee's proposal for revising the Hiring Process for Domain Director Positions. The revisions relate to	Tim moved that we approve the proposal with with the one

	<p>clarifications to show that a performance task could be involved in the hiring process, but is not required. Laura pointed that there was an error in #1 of the proposal, because it implied that the performance task would be part of the first interview. Kelly clarified that the performance task would just be identified prior to the interview process. It was agreed that “for the first interview” in #1 would be changed to “before the first interview.” Lara also explained that #2 was revised to clarify that there will be a BOT interview as part of the process. Gina commented that having two staff members on the hiring committee may be insufficient, because the staff members may not be representative of the entire school.</p>	<p>modification identified (changing “for” to “before” in #1; Matt seconded; the BOT approved the proposal with the one modification by consensus.</p>
<p>Administrative Director Hiring</p>	<p>Tim proposed that the BOT remove the internal search process from the Domain Director Hiring Process to improve diversity. Lara said that she had spoken with a number of staff members and the feedback she received was mixed: some people were excited about the possibility of increasing diversity at the school; others felt that there are few promotional opportunities and would not want to lose the internal search process. Dan said that, whatever the decision is tonight, it is important to give clear directions to the hiring committee, so the BOT, not the hiring committee, is making the decision about whether to search externally to increase diversity. Paula asked whether we could get data related to the last few rounds of hiring to see if there were diverse candidates. She also asked what would happen in the future if HCCPS did have internal diverse candidates (would the BOT put the internal search process back in?). Gina said that it creates a difficult situation where an internal candidate is told that the hiring committee wants to look externally, but still keep the internal candidate as an option. Rebecca agreed and said this becomes particularly problematic where the external search does not produce diverse candidates. Dan said that this demands more thought. If the</p>	<p>Tim proposed that the BOT move forward with hiring a permanent Director, not an Interim Director. No one had blocking concerns.</p> <p>Tim will send an email to the staff tomorrow announcing the Director position. He will also announce the position of being on the hiring committee with the new policy. The email will ask for volunteers from the staff.</p>

	<p>change is made, it will be made for all hirings. It is difficult to make it just in connection with this one hiring. It has the potential for a lot of misunderstanding and bad feelings. Amy spoke as a former BOT member who went through two hiring processes and recommended that the BOT take its time, rather than rush because of a sense of urgency. Tim proposed that we table the discussion and the issue--how diversity is fostered in the staff and how internal searches impact this-- is returned to the Personnel Committee. The BOT agreed to this through a finger sounding.</p> <p>The BOT discussed whether there should be an Interim Director. BOT members expressed different positions. Dawn asked what the hiring process from an interim position would look like. There was a discussion about whether it would make sense to hold off in hiring a permanent Director while the BOT looked at the distribution of responsibilities among the three Directors. Lara explained that discussion had started when the BOT started talking about the next LRP, but that has been on hold. She said that she thought hiring for an Interim Director would impact the quality of our candidate pool. Rich and Joe agreed with this. Dan said that we do not have a separate hiring process for interim positions, so the BOT would be going through the entire hiring process twice. He also said he thought there was sufficient time. Kelly said that the timeline the BOT is on is in line with when people are looking for these types of jobs.</p> <p>The BOT discussed the composition of the hiring committee. Lara recommended that, with respect to staff members, that people are selected who have demonstrated that they are interested in the overall health of the HCCPS, rather than just particular issues that affect them. Deirdre said that the school would provide back-up for staff members so that they could</p>	
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	attend all meetings. Dan proposed that we have a parent who has a background in business and finance. Noelle proposed that we have parents who are diverse if we are looking for diverse candidates. Dan suggested that we have at least one staff member who has longevity at the school.	
New Business	Lara reported that there was progress on the School Expansion Evaluation project. On Friday, the Directors will send out a parent evaluation survey. Lara will be meeting with two consultants who will help revise the draft questions for focus groups.	
Committee Reports - Questions only	None	
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next Meeting: March 11, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Tim Snacks: N/A Drinks: Kate Newsletter blurb: Joe	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.	

Tentative Agenda Topics for March 11, 2020 Board Meeting:

Hiring Committee
School Expansion Evaluation Project



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Teacher and Paraprofessional Salary Recommendation Protocol
Personnel Committee
Draft- circulated to Board for feedback
3/11/20

Personnel Committee Proposal to the Board to Trustees April 15, 2020
Priority Level: High
Approximate time needed for discussion: 15
Proposal to be presented by: Kelly

Text of proposal:

Every three years, the Personnel Committee researches the teacher and paraprofessional salary scales at comparable schools and recommends adjustments for Hilltown. Recommendations are then sent through the budgeting process. A cycle of reviewing salaries every three years allows staff to look ahead while also offering opportunities to “course correct” at regular intervals. If necessary, a course correction could be paced over a three year period.

Schools are considered comparable when they are similar in size or close in proximity. *In 2019, we included Bachelors and Masters scales from Westhampton, Hatfield, Williamsburg, Hadley and Chesterfield-Goshen because they are similar in size and from neighboring areas. We included Four Rivers because it is a charter school in our area that has the same number of students we do. We included Easthampton Public Schools and Northampton Public Schools because of proximity and because they are our two largest sending districts.*

Our goal is to be within 90%-110% of median salaries. This range describes the school’s intention numerically: we want to be attractive to teachers and staff, and we need to be flexible as our school finances depend on income from a variety of districts.

Why median and not average? If we used averages as data points for calibrating our salaries, we would be unduly influenced by outliers. Using the median assures that we are calibrating our salaries in comparison to the middle of the pack.

1 Industrial Parkway Easthampton, MA 01027	Phone: 413-529-7178 Fax: 413-527-1530	website: www.hilltowncharter.org e-mail: info@hilltowncharter.org



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How do we make sure that everyone gets an equal raise, and not an equal *percent* raise? We adjust Step 1 and Step 12 salaries to where we want them to be and then prorate the change by dividing the difference between Step 1 and Step 12 by eleven. One-eleventh of the difference is added to each step. This approach avoids creating larger step increases at the top of the salary scale and smaller step increases at the bottom of the salary scale.

Goals to be achieved by the proposal: To provide guidelines for equitable salary increases that are 1) consistent with salaries in the region; 2) attractive to new hires and fair to existing staff, and 3) flexible enough to be responsive to the finances of the school.

Potential problems/dissenting views:

- Sustainability
- Bear in mind that scales of other schools have invisible internal systems, such as not hiring teachers above a certain step or spending different amounts of time on certain steps.

Additional notes:

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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April 7, 2020

Daniel Klatz, Director of Administration
Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School
1 Industrial Way
Easthampton, MA 01027

Dear Mr. Klatz:

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA) has received your charter school's fiscal years 2017 and 2018 independent audit reports, dated October 25, 2017 and October 18, 2018, respectively that were submitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 71, Section 89, of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Chapter 71, Section 89, of the General Laws, which contains specific auditing and accounting requirements for Massachusetts charter schools, states, in part,

Each charter school shall keep an accurate account of all its activities and all its receipts and expenditures and shall annually cause an independent audit to be made of its accounts. Such audit shall be filed annually on or before January 1 with the department [of education] and the state auditor and shall be in a form prescribed by the state auditor. The state auditor may investigate the budget and finances of charter schools and their financial dealings, transactions and relationships, and shall have the power to examine the records of charter schools and to prescribe methods of accounting and the rendering of periodic reports.

Regulations promulgated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) require that charter schools maintain their records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and that annual audits be conducted in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAS). In accordance with OSA recommendations, DESE regulations also require that a copy of any management letter by the school's independent auditor be included with the annual audit report that is to be filed with both DESE and the OSA.

Our review of your fiscal years 2017 and 2018 independent audit reports completed by Richard Abbott, CPA found that the reports comply with audit reporting standards required by GAS.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at Richard.Giovino@sao.state.ma.us. In addition, please send your current fiscal year and all future years audit report packages to Kimberly Stanley, Audit Planning Manager, at Kimberly.Stanley@sao.state.ma.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Richard M. Giovino".

Richard M. Giovino
Audit Support Manager



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Directors Report to the Board of Trustees April, 2020

1. Remote learning plans have been sent to all families. Teachers are offering 90 minutes of real-time interaction per day plus opportunities for group check-ins such as morning meetings, book groups, math help sessions, science talks, Atelier lessons, or clubs. Technologies being used include Google classroom, Zoom, and Flipgrid. Students are strongly encouraged to participate but not penalized if they are unable to join.
2. Out technology survey found that all students have some access to internet, thought the quality is not always high and devices sometimes need to be shared. School sent out a letter inviting families to apply to borrow a Chromebook from the school if necessary, and eight families wrote back so far. Our computer loan agreements have been updated as of early March.
3. All contracted staff members have continued to receive their salaries and benefits during this period of extended school closure. Outside contractors who are not providing services are not being paid, and we are not paying Teaching Assistants for the additional hours they work in Kids' Club as we have lost the income from that program.
4. The financial picture for next year is very uncertain. The Charter School Association is recommending that schools budget very conservatively, and we expect the full picture will not be clear by the end of the current fiscal year. An initial budget will be shared at the May meeting, based on the best available information at that time.
5. Easthampton Public Schools are suspending April vacation this year. As we are following their calendar, we have done the same. The reasons for this decision are that students and teachers are just now adjusting to the remote learning plan and suspending the break keeps the momentum moving forward. The last day for the 2019-2020 school year is now Thursday, June 18.



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6. The Crisis Team (Dan, Deirdre, Lara, Mary, Deb and Emilie) is paying attention to the needs of families and students during this time away from the building. We have created document with every child's name sorted by class, and teachers from various departments in the school make an 'x' if they have had contact with student or family that week. The Crisis Team summarizes the weekly data on Fridays and lets classroom/homeroom teachers know if someone has been off the radar. Teachers and Crisis Team work together to choose an intervention if necessary.



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Council Minutes – March 27, 2020, 10:00am
<https://zoom.us/j/325123002>

Present: Tim Reynolds, Matt Dube, Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen

Regrets:

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
School Closure	<p>Education Domain is still working to provide meaningful learning opportunities within the shifting guidelines from DESE.</p> <p>Making some of the school's older Chromebooks available to families with lack of technology in their homes.</p> <p>We expect tuition payments to continue as normal this year, but the Finance Committee will work a FY21 budget which includes a salary freeze for discussion.</p>	
Director Search	<p>Hiring Committee met with the internal candidate, Kate Saccento, and will be moving her forward in the process.</p> <p>Interview with the full BoT is scheduled for Monday 4/6.</p> <p>Parent and Staff interviews have been scheduled and the committee is soliciting interview questions from appropriate stakeholders.</p>	
Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting	<p>School Closure Hiring Committee</p>	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	<p>April 3, 2020 10:00a https://zoom.us/j/325123002</p>	
Adjournment	<p>10:45am</p>	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Council Minutes – April 3, 2020, 10:00am
<https://zoom.us/j/325123002>

Present: Tim Reynolds, Matt Dube, Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen

Regrets:

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
School Continuation	<p>The School will be making some older Chromebooks available to families, prioritizing families with high needs, including those with multiple children or limited digital resources.</p> <p>New guidelines and learning expectations have been created for all grade levels with a continued understanding that individual families will respond to the best of their capabilities.</p>	<p>Dan will send an email to all parents with a Google form to request a Chromebook.</p>
Director Search	<p>Parent and Staff interviews have been completed and feedback from interviewers is being collected.</p> <p>Board of Trustees interview is scheduled for April 6 at 6:30p</p>	
Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting	<p>School Continuation</p> <p>Hiring Committee</p> <p>Board Meeting Agenda</p>	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	<p>April 10, 2020 https://zoom.us/j/325123002</p>	
Adjournment	<p>10:30am</p>	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Council Minutes – April 10, 2020, 11:00am
<https://zoom.us/j/325123002>

Present: Tim Reynolds, Matt Dube, Dan Klatz, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen

Regrets:

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
School Continuation	<p>Massachusetts has officially received a Federal waiver to cancel MCAS this year.</p> <p>Easthampton schools have decided to cancel April break and continue with schooling. Since we follow the Easthampton schedule we will be doing the same.</p>	<p>Dan and Lara will communicate these announcements to parents.</p>
Director Search	<p>All interviews have been completed and the committee met to discuss feedback. Kate has provided a list of references and the committee will be contacting them using a list of prepared questions.</p> <p>The committee will meet on the morning of April 14 to discuss the final recommendation.</p>	
Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting	<p>School Continuation</p> <p>Budget</p>	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	<p>April 24, 2020 10:00a</p> <p>https://zoom.us/j/325123002</p>	
Adjournment	<p>11:30am</p>	



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes- March 25, 2020, 7:30 a.m.

<https://zoom.us/j/148002843>

Present: Gaby Blaustein, Lara Ramsey, Kelly Woods, Dawn Reeseman, Nicole Grinaski, Liz Preston, Dawn Reeseman

Topic	Discussion	Action
Salary Increase Formula	The committee worked collaboratively to turn the outline presented at the last Board meeting into a formal proposal to present at the next Board meeting (April 15 th).	Present proposal at 4.15 Board meeting.
Next meeting time/date/location	April 22, 7:30 a.m. https://zoom.us/j/148002843 Password = heypeople	
Adjournment	8:35 a.m.	