

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 6:30 pm

Location: By Zoom (pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law)

Present: Kate Saccento, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen, Matt Dube, Noelle Barrist Stern, Rich Senecal, Kelly Woods, Karen Sise, Paula Ingram, Jen Matos, Sara Schieffelin, Chris Korczak, Dawn Reesman, Joe Wyman, Liz Preston

Regrets: None

Facilitator: Matt

Notetaker: Noelle

Guests: Kathleen Szegda; Jill Richmond; Tala Elia; Emily Webster; Nancy Childs; Tiffany Ross; D. Bonham; Normands; Allan-Charron; James Boddy; Grace Mrowicki; Jessica Allan; Meg and Jared Colenback; Gina Wyman; Dietrich; Emily Lees; Anne Schlereth; Rebecca Belcher-Timme; Tamara Kupfer; Joanna’s iPhone; Helen Korczak; Emily West; Cait Browne; Laurel Loomis; Marguerite Durant; Alex Niemiec; Sam Schoenberger

List keeper: N/A because of “raise hand” function on Zoom

Timekeeper: Chris

Mission statement read by: Sara

| Topic | Discussion | Action (if necessary) |
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| Announcements/ Appreciations/ Acknowledgements | <u>Announcements:</u> <u>Appreciations/Acknowledgements:</u> Chris thanked the staff for all of their hard work and noted how well everything is going. | |
| Any thank you notes needed? | None | |
| BOT Visibility this month? | None | |

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| Minutes | Noelle noted that there was a comment to revise the sentence under “Announcements/Appreciations/Acknowledgments,” that starts: “Kelly recognized all that the staff has done” to “Kelly recognized all that the staff and family/community volunteers have done.” She suggested making this change. | Chris moved to approve the September meeting minutes, as amended; Dawn seconded; the Board approved the minutes, as amended, by consensus. |
| Public Comment Period | James Boddy spoke on behalf of approximately twenty-four parents and requested that Hilltown substantially increase the amount of in-person schooling. He referred to the letter that was sent to the Board and asked that: (1) the letter be included with the Board packet; (2) the topic of increased in-person learning be included in the agenda for the next Board meeting; and (3) the school conduct another parent survey about interest in in-person learning. He advocated that remote learning is no substitute for in-person learning; the local epidemiological data does not support keeping children out of school; and there are sufficient precautions that can be taken to protect staff and children. He asked that students be offered two to three days per week in school. | |
| Equity Group (Grace) | Grace spoke on behalf of the Equity Group. She said that the group is trying to determine what its role in the school should be. | |
| Committee Goals (Matt) | Noelle presented the following GABS Committee goals: (1) resolve committee roles for the upcoming year and develop a policy for selecting teachers and staff members to serve on committees; (2) Board orientation; (3) Board recruitment; (4) access for Board members to shared drives/Hilltown Gmail accounts; (5) documenting Board approvals (policies/proposals); and (6) By-laws language clean-up. Kelly presented the following Personnel Committee goals: (1) research assessment; (2) review all policies | |

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| | <p>and procedures to address JEDI issues; and (3) complete the on-boarding packets.</p> <p>The Facilities and Finance Committees will present their goals at the next Board meeting.</p> | |
| <p>Technology Update (Grace)</p> | <p>Grace explained that there have been the following challenges: many high-demand items and services are backordered; devices aimed at students are not optimized for video conferencing; and there are learning curves for everyone involved.</p> <p>With respect to devices, there are Android tablets for 83 K-3 students. There have been challenges in obtaining the licenses, but the tablets will be distributed soon. There are Chromebooks for 135 4-8 students. Prior to COVID, two students were assigned to each Chromebook. Now it is a 1:1 ratio. The school has also given mobile hotspots to some families.</p> <p>With respect to platforms, there is a centralized Google site for each classroom. Students in grades 4-8 are using Google Classroom. Grades K-3 will use Seesaw. It is easier for younger users. Videoconferencing is being done through Google Meet and Zoom. Google Meet works better with the Chromebooks and the older students. Zoom has more features.</p> <p>Dawn asked if families are taking advantage of the technology drop-in hours. Grace responded that it is pretty quiet. Usually one to two people show up; they have a range of questions. This may increase once the tablets are distributed.</p> | |
| <p>Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion (JEDI) (Jen/Karen)</p> | <p>Karen went over the JEDI report and proposal to the Board that is in the packet. She explained what JEDI is not: a disciplinary committee. Anything that would require disciplinary action would go through the structures already in place. Jen added the importance</p> | <p>Kelly moved to approve JEDI as a pilot program; Liz seconded; the Board approved the proposal</p> |

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| | <p>of making sure the Board and all committees are using the same vocabulary around JEDI issues. This would be connected to the suggested training by the Collaborative for Educational Services. Jen and Karen would handle any responses to JEDI inquiries, although they would check with Matt and the Directors first to make sure that is most appropriate. Jen explained that a goal is for JEDI to be more proactive, rather than reactive. One thing they are looking at is being proactive with respect to reaching out to the community with a letter prior to the election.</p> <p>Joe asked if Karen and Jen will be expanding to include others in the committee. He stated that he would like to join. Jen noted that, when this was addressed at a prior Board meeting, there were a lot of questions about how they would go about the recruitment and selection process. They responded that they are currently planning to spread the work out among the other Board committees and then, in July, determine how they should proceed from there.</p> <p>Deirdre noted that any letter that goes out addressing the election should reflect that we are a public school with community members who have a range of political opinions.</p> <p>Dawn emphasized the importance of making sure the different groups working on equity issues are coordinating and collaborating.</p> <p>Kelly clarified that each committee will be expected to set aside time at every meeting to make sure it is addressing JEDI issues.</p> <p>There was a discussion about putting out a letter from JEDI. There was also a discussion regarding the OML and the requirements for giving notice of JEDI meetings.</p> | <p>by consensus.</p> <p>JEDI will work on a letter to the Hilltown community about the program. JEDI will run the letter by the Directors before sending.</p> <p>Noelle will follow up with JEDI about the OML requirements.</p> |
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| <p>Long Range + Strategic Planning (Liz)</p> | <p>Liz said that, with COVID, it is not the best time to begin a full strategic-planning process. It will be influenced largely by our current circumstances. She asked if there are any current issues that need to be addressed now and noted that succession planning has been raised as an issue. Matt explained that, if the Board tabled the LRP, it would be for only a few months.</p> <p>Dawn echoed Liz’s sentiments that strategic and long-range planning should generally not be done in a time of crisis. She also suggested that we look at what the appropriate amount of time for the LRP should be and suggested that ten years is too long.</p> <p>Deirdre noted that the current LRP goes into 2023. The Board is not behind if this is tabled for now. She also noted that planning for administrative succession is part of the last LRP and the Board could move forward with that.</p> <p>Joe noted that it will be important that the LRP be working in connection with the JEDI committee.</p> | |

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| <p>GABS Proposals (Sara, Paula, Noelle, and Deirdre)</p> | <p>Sara presented the proposal in the packet for selecting teachers and staff for Board committee positions. If multiple people are interested, the committee chair will notify them and see if they can resolve it among themselves. If they cannot resolve it, the committee chair will make the decision and will be encouraged to seek input from other committee members and/or conduct interviews. Deirdre noted that the committee roles are to be filled as individuals, not as representatives of a particular group in the school.</p> <p>Lara, Kelly, and Karen noted that it might be difficult for committee chairs to make the final decision (<i>e.g.</i>, if they had a child in one applicant’s class). They said it would be helpful to have others involved in the decision-making. It was proposed that the decision be made jointly between the committee chair and GABS chair.</p> <p>Paula presented the second proposal to add three new Board members. Each addressed their interest in joining the Board. Jill noted that she would like to devote her time to the Hilltown community and feels like she can make a contribution in addressing how to incorporate families who come into the school in the upper grades. Tala noted that she has three kids in the school and COVID has made her want to prioritize what she thinks is most important and impactful, such as the school community. Kathleen said how appreciative she has been of the Hilltown community and her son’s experience and wants to contribute and support those efforts.</p> | <p>GABS will work on revising the first proposal to state that, if there is a conflict, the final decision will be made by the committee chair in coordination with the GABS chair. GABS will bring the revised proposal to the next Board meeting.</p> <p>Chris moved to approve the proposal to add the three new Board members; Joe seconded; the Board approved the new members by consensus. Noelle will follow up with the new members about the next steps.</p> |
| <p>Annual Report (Kate)</p> | <p>Kate referred to the report in the packet.</p> | |
| <p>Audit (Kate/Rich)</p> | <p>Kate reported that everything went smoothly with the audit. Rich and Karen noted that the auditor has retired, but will recommend a new auditor.</p> | |

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| New Business | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The next steps in in-person, remote, and hybrid learning. This will include opinions expressed by teachers, staff, and parents (including those in the letter from the parents raised during the public comment period). Lara will gather information from teachers and staff to present. Kathleen will present local epidemiological data. 2. The communication structure about any potential COVID spread 3. COVID testing in schools | |
| Committee Reports - Questions only | | |
| Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation | <p>Next Meeting: November 18, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Matt Snacks: N/A Drinks: N/A Newsletter blurb: Joe</p> | |
| Review Action Items | Reviewed action items. | |
| Adjournment | Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m. | |

Tentative Agenda Topics for November 18, 2020 Board Meeting:

JEDI
Revised GABS proposal on selecting staff members for committees
Committee reports from Facilities and Finance Committees
Next steps for in-person, remote, and hybrid learning
COVID testing
Communication structure about potential COVID outbreak and spread
Q1 Financial Update