

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes Final Version– Thursday January 16, 2025, 6:30pm

Location: HCCPS and Zoom

Present:

In-person: Chris Kusek, Emily Boddy, Kathleen Hulton, Ben Carlis, Grace Mrowicki, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Neal Teague, Kelly Vogel, Kathleen Szegda, Kylan Mandile, Lily Newman, Kate Aleo, Tala Elia

By Zoom: Steve Sell, Andrea Hermans

Regrets:

Guests: **In-person:** Kerri Pollard, Andrea Hearn, Caroline Johnson

By Zoom: Emilie Woodward, Beth Adel, Tiffany Ross, Beili Yang, Nicole Singer

Facilitator: Kathleen Hulton

Notetaker: Emily Boddy

List keeper: Kate

Timekeeper: Kylan

Mission statement read by: Kylan

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements ● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper ● BOT Visibility this month 	<p>Announcements, Appreciations, Acknowledgements:</p> <p>Kate reminder for member to submit photos and bios for website Kathleen - MCPSA survey, board members submit.</p> <p>Agenda Check -</p> <p>Board Visibility: Coffee Hour, Tuesday Jan 28 Community Screening and Panel Jan 23 6:30, TMI organization Bingo 1/31 MLK, Jr.</p>	

<p>Approve minutes from previous BOT meeting, 12/11/24</p>	<p>Amendments: Added that a summary is included in board packet for facilities goals.</p>	<p>Kathleen motioned to approve 12/11 meeting minutes with amendment; Tala. seconded; the Board approved meeting minutes by consensus.</p>
<p>Public Comment (Kathleen)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>Teaching and Learning Updates (Rebecca)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staffing Update ● General Teaching and Learning Updates 	<p>Staffing Update:</p> <p>Unexpected departure of Science TA. Longtime sub, Will, has taken over. Also hired a building sub, Steve Hoyt.</p> <p>General T and L Updates:</p> <p>Organizing the student council is ongoing and very exciting. Lots of ideas that may be instituted next year, and some this year. The Fundraising committee may offer a Parents Night Out. The student JEDI committee met with the Board JEDI committee to possibly collaborate.</p> <p>New Health Education curriculum. Mary and Rebecca attended a training. Trying to figure out how to distribute pieces of the curriculum to teachers and outside organizations.</p> <p>Smith fellows are visiting in January. Rebecca and Tiffany will be visiting Smith to help with community engagement.</p> <p>Open Houses will happen for just K families, and for all other families. This may include student speakers</p> <p>Mini Courses start soon. Two parents are offering courses this session.</p>	

<p>Head of School Updates (Chris)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charter Renewal Update ● Family and Community Engagement ● General School Updates 	<p>Full Domain Report is included in the board packet.</p> <p>Chartern Renewal Update</p> <p>DESE has sent a review of our Charter Renewal. Full preliminary update summarized in Domain report. Indications are that we won't have issues having our Charter renewed. Final Draft coming in a couple of weeks.</p> <p>Community updates on behalf of Tiffany: Summarized events happening, which are outlined in detail in the Domain report.</p> <p>General School Updates:</p> <p>Engaging with parent Seth Gregory to help with marketing, and communications. We are also connected with a PR firm through MCPSA to help with getting more PR, right now around the Playground and 30th Anniversary.</p> <p>Finances are healthier than we thought, as per pupil spending higher than anticipated. We are looking at one off costs to use these funds for, as we can't use these funds as if they are recurrent.</p> <p>Wetlands permitting process is beginning prior to new playground starting.</p>	
<p>Board Goals, Lily (Update)</p>	<p>Document is included in the packet.</p> <p>Lily provided a brief summary of the document as included.</p> <p>Lily emphasizes that committee goals should be aligned with or strengthening to the overall board goals.</p> <p>Board members proposed ways their existing goals support/align with the board goals.</p>	<p>Lily has asked that committees be considering how these goals are living in committee agendas, so to be addressed. Members should plan to engage in discussion around this at our next meeting.</p>

<p>Grade Realignment, Chris. (Discussion and Decision)</p>	<p>Grade Realignment Summary Report included in the board packet.</p> <p>Kathleen spoke with 19 staff members, including most classroom teachers and all classroom teachers whose grades will change. Conversations with some other staff, specials’ teachers and TAs. Everyone is somewhere on the spectrum from accepting to excited for the plan as laid out by Chris and Rebecca. Kathleen expresses appreciation for Chris and Rebecca for how they handled this process and communicated throughout. Kathleen shares that it was through their leadership that some teachers staff came around to acceptance for the grade realignment.</p> <p>Chris expressed appreciation for the way staff and teachers engaged in this process. Dan Klatz also helped to inform the process through sharing history. Provides a summary of the written summary.</p> <p>Kathleen clarifies that this body is voting on the realignment structure, but not the logistics (timeline, etc.). We are also not deciding on whether to have a 4 year old Kindy. This will include a change to our charter. If it happens, that will be dealt with at a later date.</p> <p>Rebecca expresses appreciation for collaboration, and for the process. And appreciates Chris’ full report.</p> <p>Tala asks about numbers and entry points. Chris explains that it is somewhat dependent on whether the TK class happens. Primary entry point will remain K (or TK) Realignment would expand secondary entry points to 5th and 6th grade.</p>	<p>Tala motioned to approve Grade Realignment Proposal; Lily seconded. The Board approved by consensus.</p>
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	<p>Board questions and clarifications related to student body size - for example, student cohort getting larger over time for the benefit of students; developmental groupings;</p> <p>Steve appreciates the meaningful involvement of students in the process. Sees this as one of the reasons charter schools are great - innovation, rethink the way things are done. Asks for more context around the alignment between the needs outlined the LRP and Attrition issues. Chris explains this was an opportunity to address what is laid out in LRP and also attrition.</p> <p>Tala and Lily touch on entry points and attrition - K-8s often face attrition at 7th/8th because of entry points at other schools.</p> <p>Kathleen S asks for clarification around the decreasing numbers in the upper grades. Chris explains that 7 and 8 would reduce to 3 teachers, rather than 4. This shift would allow for allocation of some resources to the lower grades in a more balanced way. Chris cites the need for a Math Interventionist as a mid tier support, like Andrea Hearn is as a Reading Specialist. Currently costly special ed resources are being used in some scenarios where a math support person could be used.</p> <p>Ben asks about how the building might be used with the new numbers. Chris talks about working with creative solutions for using our space and our personnel in more creative ways.</p> <p>Question about Wednesday half days. Chris answered that this may come up in implementation, but not currently being assessed.</p> <p>Neal's concern that if programming and numbers decrease in the lower grades, could end up with very small older grades. Wonders how we put</p>	
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	<p>checks in place to ensure this isn't the case. Chris responds that the trend of departures in the upper grades (over coming in) requires that we look at upper grades and ensure it's a quality educational and social experience for students and families. Remarks that it's less about numbers and more about the experience families and students are having.</p> <p>Grace responds with her experience working with the Prisms before expansion to now. The changes to support acculturation with large influxes of new students at 6th grade entry point. Distributing entry points and these changes aim to rebalance some of the issues around culture.</p> <p>Implementation is a management decision. Board can talk about implementation, but ultimately Chris and Rebecca will work with staff and teachers to make these decisions.</p> <p>Regular updates to the board will be essential, as the board will be part of some of the decisions (finance, for example). So regular updates will help the board make informed decisions when that is required.</p> <p>Kelly remarks that we should be thinking about how we frame the appeal for a kid entering at 6th grade, but being paired with 5th graders.</p>	
<p>Remote Work Policy, Tala (Discussion and Decision)</p>	<p>Tala provides a summary of the policy, which is included in the board packet.</p> <p>Lily asks about how student-facing staff manage work time during non-student-facing times (eg summer for admins; stipend based summer work). Suggests a clause to clarify this.</p>	<p>Kate motioned to approve Remote Work Policy with suggested changes as proposed; Neal seconded; The Board approved by consensus.</p>

	Lily suggests that the policy specifies that HoS or D of T&L has to provide final approval for flexible work plans.	
Committee Reports - Questions, Kathleen H.	None.	
Meeting Wrap-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes Finalization ● Snacks + Drinks for next meeting ● Newsletter Blurb ● New business for next Board meeting 	Next Meeting: <i>To be determined*</i> Facilitator: Kathleen H Snacks: Kate Drinks: Grace Newsletter blurb: Emily New Business: Annual Meeting Midyear Review Retreat Update	*Next meeting date and time to be determined over email. Due to possible issues with quorum
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:20pm	Kylan motioned to adjourn; Lily seconded; the meeting was adjourned.