

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 6:30pm

Location: HCCPS and Zoom

Present:

In-person: Kate Saccento, Laura Davis, Emily Boddy, Matt Dube, Kathleen Szegda, Kathleen Hulton, Ben Carlis, Grace Mrowicki, Kelly Vogel,, Tiffany Ross, Lily Newman, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Stacey Giufre, Kylan Mandile, Kate Ewall , Tala Elia

By Zoom:

Regrets:

Guests: **In-person:** Andrea Hermans, Kate Aleo, Neal Teague, Beili Yang

By Zoom: Jackson Matos, Seth Harwood, Melissa Flanders, A Carter Bent, Sara, Rye Zemelsky, Myssie Cassighno, Dawn G-M, Patti Mars-Senecal, Debra Courage, Alex Rubic, Zoe Klatz, Ali, Dana Gramp

Facilitator: Matt Dube

Notetaker: Emily

List keeper: Kathleen S.

Timekeeper: Kylan M.

Mission statement read by: Ben Carlis

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 ● Thank You Note Check ● BOT Visibility this month 	<p>Announcements, Appreciations, Acknowledgements:</p> <p>Igneri Family for Teacher Appreciation food truck and donation of sales' portion from a fundraiser they did for us.</p> <p>Ben Carlis, tire swing and facilities work</p> <p>Chris Haynes, former parent helping out with piano for the spring festival</p> <p>The board leadership working tirelessly in the face of unexpected departures of our directors.</p> <p>Agenda Check: Change of item - rather than domain reviews, will discuss next steps re: directors.</p>	

	<p>Thank you note check:</p> <p>Above</p> <p>Board Visibility:</p> <p>Will be discussed in Domain Updates.</p>	
<p>Approve minutes from previous BOT meeting</p>	<p>Amended the date to Read April 10, 2024. Amended GABS section.</p>	<p>Kathleen S motioned to approve April meeting minutes; Kathleen H seconded; the Board approved April meeting minutes by consensus.</p>
<p>Public Comment (Matt)</p>	<p>None.</p>	
<p>Domain Updates (15 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tuition FY24 Update ● Staffing updates ● Events, May and June 	<p>Tuition FY25 Update (Kate)</p> <p>FY25 - projection is great news, 35k above the previous projection. Continuing to work to get the budget to 0, hoping not to pass a budget with a deficit. On a positive trajectory for FY25. Finance will bring budget in June.</p> <p>Matt notes that the budget may be different based on director changes and interim solutions.</p> <p>Staffing updates (Laura, Kate)</p> <p>Domain Admin report includes summary about hiring progress for speech/language pathologist. Update is that Hilltown parent, Nina Foley, is able to contract for the hours needed for the remainder of the year. Students who have missed services will be provided compensatory services in spring, summer or fall.</p> <p>Student Behavior Support position is going well with Jess Williamson in the role. She has been implementing good programs and practices that have been helping immensely. Some of the kids that have been struggling since the start of the year are doing markedly better. Laura hopes this role will be</p>	

	<p>continued into next school year, and will enact the hiring process accordingly.</p> <p>Events Update (Tiffany)</p> <p>Music festival is Friday.</p> <p>Annual Meeting 5/22</p> <p>Il Teatro, final of the year is 5/24, with priority to 8th graders.</p> <p>Musical is May 31</p> <p>June: Field Day, Summer Celebrations, Final Prisms dance, graduation, other class specific events.</p>	
<p>LRP Timeline Revision Proposal, Kate (Discussion, Decision)</p>	<p>Proposal included in the packet. Kathleen gave an overview of what process the ad hoc committee went through to adjust the timeline of the LRP - the school will be revisiting things on the timeline over time.</p> <p>Kate went through places the timeline was amended and added some explanation for why things were shifted. (Included in packet summary)</p>	<p>Lily motioned to pass the proposal; Tala seconded; the Board approved by consensus.</p>
<p>Directors Update, next steps, Matt (Update/Discussion)</p>	<p>BoT Leadership explained that they have had conversations with staff, and this portion of the agenda to allow board to ask questions and have a discussion. No decisions are being made tonight, and there will be a special meeting next week to address issues more specifically. Lily explains the vision of reimagining the leadership structure for the school, and that the board leadership will shift as a result. This coming year will be interim, due to the shifting landscape and should serve the school in regards to the long-term vision for the structure of the school. This will be a challenge, but also an opportunity to work through things thoroughly through next year. The BoT's role is to hold the charter, the community and the vision of the school over the next year.</p> <p>BoT Leadership hosted open hour this afternoon to talk with staff, and acknowledged the collective work to do and that it will be a collaborative effort. Rebecca felt that it was a great opportunity for staff</p>	<p>Emily and Matt will make an agenda for next Tuesday May 14 meeting. Possibly a second agenda for Weds May 15 or Thurs May 16 in case we don't have a consensus.</p> <p>Lily will connect with staff, Tiffany about collecting family feedback.</p>

	<p>to share their feelings and ideas and reactions to the news.</p> <p>Kate Saccento explained that the decision to depart the role was about professional growth and new opportunities. She appreciates the school, cares for the community, children and the staff. She feels this is an opportunity for the school to grow and excel, and remarked on the quality of people who most recently filled new roles and the excellent staff that have been in place over time. She is willing to work with staff to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>Laura said she is committed to ensuring that nothing is left hanging, and will put in a lot of work to make sure that she is finishing the year really strong. She remarked that she loves the school and thinks it is an amazing place. She feels this is an opportunity for the school, and that there is a strong community in place at Hilltown.</p> <p>Board discussion:</p> <p>Member asked, what is the overall temperature of the community as received by the board leadership following the announcement? While there hasn't been a robust response directly to the leadership, community members have questions about whether there was some major incident that caused both leaders to resign.</p> <p>While there wasn't any significant event, Matt notes that we need to have a community discussion around mutual respect and how we treat teachers and staff here.</p> <p>Lily notes the strength of the teachers and staff - that there is a momentum and a willingness for creative problem solving.</p> <p>Kathleen notes that she and Matt were on campus when the emails went out, and during a time when families were collecting children after Musical rehearsal. Kathleen talked to many, they have questions, wondering what the impetus for the resignation was.</p> <p>A lot of the older parents voiced their concern about the pressure the directors have endured throughout the year.</p> <p>Overall, reaction is of concern and wondering, but</p>	
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	<p>not so much of deep worry or panic. Kathleen notes that one parent responded to her, on hearing the news, “The school is not run by two people.” She echoes that the community is strong.</p> <p>A community member asks for clarity around what aspects of the roles are unsustainable. Kate explains her role over time and reiterates much of what the board will be reviewing with regards to the leadership structure moving forward. Laura explains the value of the Behavior support coordinator in alleviating the pressure on the Dir of T + L.</p> <p>Tala notes that these two positions shouldn’t be posted as they are currently. She suggests a single exec director model, based on her experience on the Board and in Board Leadership. She is interested to know what the staff thinks of a model like that. The 3 leader model worked well for a long time and hasn’t been working as well in the last few years, as evidenced by all the transitions.</p> <p>Lily responds that they are actively looking at the job descriptions and sorting responsibilities into ‘buckets’ in order to assess what is needed.</p> <p>Lily asks Kate and Laura to explain what is the best way the Board can support the new director(s):</p> <p>Kate notes that she has felt extremely supported by the Board in the past years, and asks that that level of support continues. Admin consultant to the school leaders has been valuable, especially having someone from the outside help problem-solve around challenges. Kate is in favor of an Executive Director position instead of the multi-director model.</p> <p>Laura has felt supported by the board in formal and informal conversations. Laura notes that there isn’t a magic answer around how many leaders is the right way - really depends on who is in the role, but there are a lot of downsides when two people are not matched well. Suggests that regardless of the hierarchy, a good match is important.</p> <p>Kathleen S. is in agreement about a single leader model, and eager to hear what staff think of that. Reiterates that we need to think about how - as a</p>	
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	<p>community - we are treating directors and staff.</p> <p>Community member notes that he is shocked and sad about the news, very concerned about turnover and the impact on the kids and the staff. Hopes that there is a conversation about how to “help the helpers” who are normalizing the change and supporting the children. Remarks on the amazing teaching staff, and worried that they aren’t being treated well.</p> <p>Kate E asks if there is a role for the board in supporting teachers and staff, how do we create a culture in the parent community around how we treat the staff/admin?</p> <p>Andrea remarks on Hilltown and her experience at other schools with difficult Administrators - difficult that these administrators are leaving because they are so strong. Notes the conscientious nature of the teachers at Hilltown - as colleagues and as her child’s teachers, and wants to ensure that we are deliberate and we find people for admin who are really suitable and skilled.</p> <p>Rebecca expresses that she feels supported by the board. Taking care in the process of hiring new leaders is essential.</p> <p>Parents may be most impactful in helping other parents understand better behavior - suggests the board could be Ambassadors in establishing norms around communication and etiquette.</p> <p>Kathleen H. notes that she has thought a lot about the way parents are interacting and that the board needs to take the lead to have larger communication with the whole community about these issues. Suggests we need to have community discussion about how we treat each other, and especially the people who work here. The mission is: We are all in this together, we are all raising these children together.</p> <p>Grace notes that a perspective that is missing is the cumulative nature - eg 1,000 papercuts, not one big blow up. Parents often perceive their complaints as little things - but it is often the cumulative nature</p>	
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	<p>that most impacts staff.</p> <p>Lily notes that the purpose of Charter Schools is to innovate and set examples with our autonomy. The vision is for us to pave the way to do things differently. Lily works in many schools, and these types of conversations are happening all around the valley. We have a shortage of administrators, and teachers. She notes that we need to use our flexibility and nimbleness and get creative. Lily notes that Hilltown authentically puts kids first and that we can have courageous conversations and pave a new way forward. Teachers will be fully involved in the hiring and transition.</p> <p>Meeting next week, Tuesday, to parse out what jobs we are posting.</p> <p>Kathleen polls the BoT to ensure we have a quorum for a fully remote meeting.</p> <p>Leadership will bring some ideas to discuss, which will include staff input possibly by virtual information gathering to garner the most engagement. Leadership will work with Andrea, Rebecca, Grace and Tiffany to elicit feedback.</p>	
<p>GABS Update, Emily and Kelly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Meeting will be on May 22, all should plan to attend. ● Chairs have been emailed about what to write up for their updates, including a sample from last year. GABS is asking that written reports be robust, but will present committees differently this year. GABS welcomes feedback - working plan is to have committee members stand. Emcee will ask members of a committee to stand, announce member names and give a brief description of the committee. The more robust report can be read in the packet. ● Ask that chairs invite all committee members, including community members, to attend. 	

<p>New and renewed Board Member Recommendations Emily (Proposal and Decision)</p>	<p>New Members proposed: Kate Aleo, Neal Teague, Andrea Hermans</p> <p>Renewals: Kathleen H and Emily</p> <p>Vote on Slate by roll call: (1) Kate and Neal, Andrea pending approval of by-law change (2) Emily and Kathleen H</p> <p>Rebecca and Grace, approved at prior meetings, will also be presented as part of the final slate at the Annual meeting.</p>	<p>Tala motioned to vote to approve the New board members, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Grace Mrowicki, Kate Aleo, Neal Teague, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Grace Mrowicki, and Andrea Hermans (pending by-law change) to be voted on as a slate at the Annual Meeting; the Board approved by roll call.</p> <p>Matt Dube - yes Kathleen Hulton - yes Kelly Vogel - yes Stacey Guifre -yes Tala Elia- yes Lily Newman - yes Kathleen Szegda - yes Ben Carlis - yes Kylan Mandile - yes Emily Boddy - yes Kate Ewall - yes</p> <p>Matt moved to approve Emily and Kathleen H for second terms, the board approved by roll call.</p> <p>Matt Dube - yes Kathleen Hulton - yes Kelly Vogel - yes Stacey Guifre -yes Tala Elia- yes Lily Newman - yes Kathleen Szegda - yes Ben Carlis - yes Kylan Mandile - yes Emily Boddy - yes Kate Ewall - yes</p>
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Board Leadership Proposal Matt. (Discussion/Decision)	Proposal included in the packet. Proposes that three-person board leadership structure continue as a pilot into the next fiscal year.	Kathleen S motioned to approve the proposal; Tala seconded; the Board approved by consensus.
Committee Reports - Questions, Matt	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 (Special): Tuesday, May 14, 2024, 6:30pm (Virtual only) Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting: June 12, 2024 6:30pm Facilitator: Kathleen H Snacks: Ben Drinks: Kylan Newsletter blurb: Emily New Business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Safe and Supportive Schools ● Budget - FY25 for approval ● Hiring updates ● July meeting move to third week - determine if there is a regular meeting or a special meeting re application for Charter renewal (due August 1 with board approval ahead of time) 	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm	Kathleen S motioned to adjourn; Tala seconded; the meeting was adjourned.

Tentative Agenda Topics for the May Board Meeting:

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