

## HCCPS Board of Trustees

### Meeting Agenda

July 24th, 2024 6:30pm

HCCPS, 1 Industrial Pkwy, Easthampton, MA 01027

Also: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83679293502?pwd=bjZya3FvVTFmd216WlkvZDVPLzhjZz09>

Meeting ID: 836 7929 3502

Passcode: 7dvsWu

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.

**Facilitator: Kathleen Hulton**

Topic (estimated time)	Who	Action	Estimated Time
<b>Welcoming (read mission statement):</b> (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements</li><li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper</li><li>● Thank You Note Check</li><li>● BOT Visibility this month</li><li>● Approve minutes from previous BOT meetings</li></ul>	Kathleen	Decision	6:30
<b>Public Comment</b> (5 mins)	Kathleen		6:35
<b>Domain Updates</b> (10 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Hiring Update</li></ul>	Kate/Rebecca	Update	6:40

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing updates</li> </ul>			
<b>Student Opportunity Act</b> (10 mins)	Kate/Rebecca	Discussion and Decision	6:50
<b>Charter Renewal</b> (10 mins)	Kate/Rebecca	Discussion and Decision	7:00
<b>Teacher member bylaw change</b> (5 min)	Kathleen/Lily	Update	7:10
<b>HOS: transition planning; bylaw change</b> (10 mins)	Kathleen/Lily/ Ben	Update	7:15
<b>Hiring Policy</b> (15 mins)	Kate/Tala	Discussion and Decision	7:25
<b>Committee Report questions</b> (5 mins)	Kathleen H		7:40
<b>Meeting Wrap-up</b> (5 mins) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes Finalization</li> <li>• Snacks + Drinks for next meeting</li> <li>• Newsletter Blurb</li> <li>• New business for next Board meeting</li> <li>• Facilitator for Next Meeting</li> <li>• Review action items</li> </ul>	Kathleen H		7:45
<b>Adjournment</b>			8:00

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, June 12, 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, Tiffany Ross, Lily Newman, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Kylan Mandile

**By Zoom:** Kelly Vogel, Stacy Guifre

**Regrets:** Tala Elia, Kate Ewall

**Guests:** **In-person:** Andrea Hermans  
**By Zoom:** Kate Aleo, Beili Yang

**Facilitator:** Kathleen Hulton

**Notetaker:** Emily Boddy

**List keeper:** Lily Newman

**Timekeeper:** Ben Carlis

**Mission statement read by:** Andrea Hermans

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p><b>Welcoming (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements</li> <li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper</li> <li>● Thank You Note Check</li> <li>● BOT Visibility this month</li> </ul>	<p><b>Announcements, Appreciations, Acknowledgements:</b></p> <p>Appreciation for all the work Lily and Kathleen are doing in the hiring process.</p> <p>Acknowledge departing board members, Matt, Kate E and Stacy</p> <p>Appreciation for 8th grade students, and departing families graduating.</p> <p>Acknowledge staff and departing directors.</p> <p>Appreciation for Facilities member, grandparent Rick Stultz who recently repaired sandbox and picnic table, and helped with a capital expense spreadsheet for the school.</p> <p><b>Agenda Check</b></p> <p><b>Thank you note check:</b></p>	

	<p>Tiffany and Kate will coordinate a Thank you note for Rick Stultz</p> <p><b>Board Visibility:</b></p> <p>Summer celebration  Graduation  Goodbye Ceremony</p>	
<b>Approve minutes from previous BOT meetings</b>	<p>May 8: Amended the date to read 2024 in the footer</p> <p>May 14: Amended the date to read 2024 in the footer</p>	<p>Matt motioned to approve May 8 meeting minutes; Lily seconded; the Board approved May 8 meeting minutes by consensus.</p> <p>Lily motioned to approve May 14 meeting minutes; Matt seconded; the Board approved May 14 meeting minutes by consensus.</p>
<b>Public Comment (Kathleen)</b>	None.	
<p><b>Domain Updates (15 mins)</b></p> <p>Staffing Update (Laura)</p> <p>Safe and Supportive Schools Update (Laura)</p> <p>Charter Renewal Visit (Kate)</p> <p>Director Hiring Update (Kathleen, Lily)</p>	<p><b>Staffing updates</b></p> <p>Appreciation to the hiring committee who hired Jess Williamson into a permanent role as Student Behavior Coordinator.</p> <p><b>Safe and Supportive Schools</b></p> <p>Final official last meeting. Appreciation for the committee . Completed a self reflection tool, from which 3 major things emerged: (1) Want to focus on belonging and inclusion among (2) how to be a more safe and supportive school (3) Gap in structures was a way to view and analyze and make recommendations around data. (4) PD planning team to ensure ideas from PD days are carried through.</p> <p>Tools are in place, but the action plan will propose creating a data team to focus on school climate and social-emotional climate in the school. This will include a broad range of stakeholders, and uplifting student voices. Laura and Jess taking the lead on the</p>	

	<p>action plan. Able to apply for a grant as part of part 2 of this process, which can support a full version of the work.</p> <p>Lily describes a resource that is being built for the new leaders to include contacts, progress, etc.</p> <p><b>Charter Renewal Visit</b></p> <p>Site visit will be late October, early November.</p> <p>Board will be presented with renewal application for approval at a meeting in July. Due start of August.</p> <p><b>Director Hiring Update</b></p> <p>HOS - 13 applicants, 3 moving to next stage and determining 3-4 maybes at Friday's meeting. Next steps: continue screening. Task interviews next week. Thinking through how to have these visits when staff are in the building.</p> <p>DOTL - 20 applications, one internal candidate. Committee has met twice. Internal candidate will do task interview early next week. Two other candidates will be going to screening interviews so far.</p>	
<p><b>Student Opportunity Act, Kate &amp; Laura</b> (Discussion, Decision)</p>	<p>Every public school district in the state is required to do a SOA outline that ids groups in the school that we target for achievement in some way.</p> <p>Step 1: Choose subgroup to target with interventions, based on data sources provided. HCCPS will target student with disabilities around absenteeism and lower achievement growth in ELA and Math.</p> <p>Step 2: DESE provides scripted options for focus areas. HCCPS will focus on (1) promoting students' physical and mental health and ensure that students are here and available to learn. (2) MTTs that helps student make academic progress and achieve.</p> <p>Step 3: Evidence-based programs of choice Enhanced support for SEL and mental health.</p>	<p>No Decision.</p>

	<p>Kate has helped to ensure we have the funding for this work. Funding comes through our tuition funds, so budget accounts for this.</p> <p>No decision on SOA made at this time. Proposal forthcoming.</p>	
<p><b>FY25 Budget, Kate</b> (Discussion, Decision)</p>	<p>Included in packet.</p> <p>Proposed budget is with a deficit. (unusual)</p> <p>Kate reviewed some of the increases and decreases as included in the budget.</p> <p>Kate explains that we are in a better place than many other school districts. Deficit is lower than we anticipated and we didn't have to cut positions or raises.</p> <p>Kylan explains that there could be a surplus that can carry over. Uncertainty around hiring changes may shift the budget as well. Explains that we are in good shape, on good footing.</p> <p>Appreciation expressed for Carla for her work on the budget.</p>	<p>Matt motioned to pass the FY25 budget; Kathering Szegda seconded; the Board approved by consensus.</p>
<p><b>GABS Annual Meeting Debrief , Emily and Kelly</b> (discussion)</p>	<p>Over 65 people attended, over 45 voted (Thanks to Monique for keeping track!).</p> <p>Ended right on time.</p> <p>Discussed the feedback around the Arts-integration discussion - positive way to bring out voices from parents around the topic.</p> <p>Plan to bring these perspectives to the work of assessing our Art-Integration, and hope to have more discussions like these. People were excited and enthusiastic talking through this.</p>	

<p><b>GABS - Board Membership, Officers</b> Emily (Proposal and Decision)</p>	<p>Vote by roll on each individual candidate for first and second terms.</p> <p>Kate Aleo - All trustees voted yes by roll Neal Teague - All trustees voted yes by roll Rebecca Belcher-Timme - All trustees voted yes by roll Grace Mrowicki - All trustees voted yes by roll Andrea Hermans- All trustees voted yes by roll</p> <p>Kathleen Hulton - All trustees voted yes by roll Emily Boddy - All trustees voted yes by roll</p> <p>Officers: Kathleen Hulton, President Lily Newman and Ben Carlis, Co-Vice Presidents Emily Boddy, Clerk Kylan Mandile, Treasurer</p>	<p><b>Individual Members approved by Roll Call:</b></p> <p>Matt Dube Kathleen Hulton Kelly Vogel - not present Stacey Guifre Tala Elia - not present Lily Newman Kathleen Szegda Ben Carlis Kylan Mandile Emily Boddy Kate Ewall - not present</p> <p><b>Officers:</b></p> <p>Matt moved to approve officers, Kathleen Szegda seconded. Approved by consensus.</p>
<p><b>School Leadership Hiring - Committee Chair designation</b> Matt. (Discussion/Decision)</p>	<p>Matt, as current president, officially designates Kathleen Hulton and Lily Newman as chairs of leadership hiring committees.</p>	<p>Emily motioned to approve the designation; Kylan seconded; the Board approved by consensus.</p>
<p><b>Updated hiring policy and procedures proposal, Stacy</b> (Discussion, Decision)</p>	<p>Included in Packet.</p> <p>Stacy highlighted the primary changes, as laid out in the proposal.</p> <p>Concerns were presented around the review of public facing media. Legal concerns, bias concerns. Stacy explains that the committee reviewed all of these concerns and ultimately decided to include it. With the considerations of Equity issues, the policy builds in anti-bias issues.</p> <p>Kate suggests that Russ reviews the media piece to ensure that there is clarity around the media piece. Stacy agrees that that can happen.</p> <p>Kate will take the policy to Russ for review. Matt recommends having Tala present during the phone</p>	<p>No decision.</p> <p>Proposal will return to Personnel.</p> <p>Kate and Tala will meet with Russ about the legal aspect of the hiring policy re: media review.</p>

	call with Russ.	
<b>July Meeting(s),</b> Kathleen H (Discussion)	<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter Renewal process, late July</li> <li>● D of T&amp;L and HOS board interviews.</li> <li>● Approve Director of T&amp;L and HOS, poss exec session to discuss salary.</li> </ul>	
<b>Committee Reports - Questions,</b> Kathleen H.	None.	
<p><b>Meeting Wrap-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minutes Finalization</li> <li>● Snacks + Drinks for next meeting</li> <li>● Newsletter Blurb</li> <li>● New business for next Board meeting</li> </ul>	<p>Next Meeting: July 24, 2024 6:30pm  Facilitator: Kathleen H  Snacks: Grace  Drinks: Rebecca  Newsletter blurb: Emily</p> <p><b>New Business:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charter Renewal</li> <li>● SOA</li> <li>● New HOS, Dir T &amp; L</li> <li>● Personnel Hiring Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Review Action Items</b>	Reviewed action items.	
<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 8:13 pm	Kathleen S motioned to adjourn; Matt seconded; the meeting was adjourned.



**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, June 26, 2024, 6:30pm

**Location:** Zoom

**Present:**

**In-person: All virtual**

**By Zoom:** Emily Boddy, Matt Dube, Kathleen Szegda, Kathleen Hulton, Lily Newman, Ben Carlis, Tala Elia, Kelly Vogel, Grace Mrowicki, Rebecca Belcher-Timme

**Regrets:** Kylan Mandile, Stacey Giufre, Kate Ewall, Kate Saccento, Laura Davis, Tiffany Ross

**Guests:** Andrea Hermans

**Facilitator:** Kathleen Hulton

**Notetaker:** Emily

**List keeper:** Grace

**Timekeeper:** Lily

**Mission statement read by:** Lily

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p><b>Welcoming</b> (read mission statement) (Kathleen H.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Announcements</li> <li>● Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper</li> <li>● Approve minutes from two Board Meetings on June 24</li> </ul>	<p><b>Announcements:</b></p> <p>None</p> <p><b>Agenda Check</b></p>	<p>Ben motioned to approve minutes from June 24. Matt seconded.</p>
<p><b>Public Comment</b> (Kathleen H.)</p>	<p>None</p>	
<p><b>Board Interview with Director of Teaching and Learning Candidate</b> (30 mins):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introductions</li> <li>● Q &amp; A with Board and Head of</li> </ul>	<p>Q What is something you've heard from or noticed with students that you would take forward into the role?</p> <p>A Thinking about the school climate survey, students who feel disenfranchised or disconnected from the school. Interested in tackling on a school wide level, and wants to get to know the older students better and understand how they might feel more</p>	

<p>School Candidate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidate questions for Board</li> </ul> <p>Kathleen H., Lily (Discussion)</p>	<p>connected, how that can affect school culture. Big piece of work will be around 12-14 year old buy-in, which will likely address some of the school culture issues that are apparent.</p> <p>Q What ways might you go about getting to know older kids? A Spend time in classrooms, advisories. Would like to know more and have a regular presence in addition to front-door/blacktop, more casual spaces. Will be hard to effectively collaborate unless she knows the students well. Will need to be engaged systematically across the whole school, rather than just coming into classrooms for evaluations.</p> <p>Q Even though 'behavior' not part of this role anymore, it will come into play. How do you perceive your role to be in service to that? A Feels she might be able to partner with Jess to cover more of the behavior stuff in the lower grades, and as it pertains to T&amp;L. Understands that behavior will be part of her role, and hopes behavior can be addressed at a culture level, which she would like to be involved in.</p> <p>Q How do you see the shift from classroom to this role? A Has a close relationship with colleagues, hopes that those good relationships will extend into this role. Hopes to be supportive, helpful and that her transition from classroom to this role will help with buy-in. She'd like to see teachers supported in a different way, especially in light of the most recent challenges. Cites questions she's considering in relationship to those challenges.</p> <p>Q what are your goals and ideas around supporting development for teachers proactively? References the gaps teachers have reporting in PD. A Would like to know more about what challenges teachers are facing, particularly in the upper grades (quite familiar with the needs/wants of teachers in the lower grades, cites examples). Would like to pay more attention the bigger professional goals and interests teachers hold. She'd also like more cross-age discourse, will have to do a lot of listening.</p>	
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	<p>Q What kinds of support do you think you'll need in this new role - from the board, budget, staff?  A Grace and space to make mistakes. Not clear specific support, but would like time managing her calendar around school events eg MCAS, ordering materials, etc ; Will need help understanding special ed.more robustly; Will have procedural questions for the board.</p> <p>Supportive environment and has always been able to get collaborative support and hopes this would happen on a larger scale.</p> <p>Questions from the candidate:</p> <p>When would this job be starting?  There would be a discussion about what makes most sense for all parties.  Rebecca says she'd like to start as soon as possible in order to post and hire her replacement as soon as possible.</p>	
<p><b>Head of School Decision</b>  (30 mins) Kathleen H., Lily, Hiring Committee  (Discussion + Decision)</p>	<p>The hiring committee underwent a rigorous process and recommends Chris Kusek to be hired as the Head of School.</p> <p>Hiring committee members present (Grace, Emily, Kathleen, Lily) gave feedback about what evidence the decision was based on .</p> <p>Connecting with kids - through Task and on the Zoom Monday night.  Discussion about the way he has balanced complex roles with many parts before in other roles.  Knowledge of special education, behavior very strong.</p> <p>Example of a way he interacted with a student during the Zoom session:  He got a lot of questions and interaction from the students, which showed he was approachable. A student asked what he likes to do and he talked about a new thing he is doing, growth mindset, starting something new and not being great at it right away.  Tala adds that she loved the question a student asking if he'd done a job like this, referenced that</p>	<p>Tala motioned to hire Chris Kusek as Head of School; Matt seconded; the Board approved by consensus.</p> <p>Matt offers a friendly amendment to offer Chris Kusek a salary of \$120k per year; Tala accepts the amendment.</p> <p>Consensus vote approved by roll call. (Voting members)</p> <p>Matt Dube - yes  Emily Boddy - yes  Kathleen Hulton - yes  Kathleen Szegda - yes  Ben Carlis - yes  Kelly Vogel - yes  Tala Elia - yes  Lily Newman - Abstain</p>

	<p>just like she will be new to 5th grade, he will be new and that all the work that he's done up to now has prepared him, just like all the work she's done has prepared her. And that he's excited and also a little nervous.</p> <p>Emily added that he recognized his gaps and how he would collaborate and be open to seeking out conversations to understand what he needs to know.</p> <p>Kathleen adds that she feels like his skill set covers so many of the needs we mapped out prior to meeting candidates.</p> <p>Committee was unanimous and didn't have to go through a lot of trying to come to consensus, which also aligned with data from the community.</p> <p>Nod to Lily for ensuring that student engagement happened in the process.</p> <p>Lily explains that she knows candidate personally, and as such stepped back from leading with this candidate - Kathleen had the screening call. Lily abstained from voting on this call due to this personal connection.</p> <p>Salary question. Decision was made with the hiring committee and in close communication with Carla. Reviewed the increased responsibilities from current role (previously divided) and salary in current role. Looked for something doable and achievable.</p>	
<p><b>Meeting Wrap-up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Minutes Finalization</li> <li>● Summary of Next Steps</li> </ul>	<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kathleen will connect and offer Chris the job, will report back.</li> <li>● Tomorrow night BoT meets to make a decision about the Director of T&amp;L.</li> <li>● Board Leadership will verify the offer, negotiating start date and any related details. Working with current leaders around succession planning, and transition plan.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Review Action Items</b></p>	<p>Reviewed action items.</p>	

<b>Adjournment</b>	Meeting adjourned at 7:44 pm	Emily B motioned to adjourn; Tala seconded; the meeting was adjourned.
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**2024**

**Student Opportunity Act Plan**

**— Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public  
School**

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## **Introduction and Context**

The Student Opportunity Act (SOA) was enacted in 2019, injecting significant new funding into the Commonwealth's educational system, with a focus on providing funding to districts serving students with the greatest needs. The law also included a critical provision that requires every district to set clear targets for improving disparities in achievement among student groups and develop a three-year plan to implement evidence-based strategies to meet their targets.

## **Introduction and Context**

The first set of three-year plans were submitted amid the backdrop of the COVID pandemic. The significant disruptions associated with the pandemic - including delays in SOA funding flowing to districts, the need for districts to spend significant time on recovery and reentry planning for all students, and interruptions to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) testing and accountability system - made it very difficult for districts to fully implement their SOA plans.

The following slides provide an overview of the new SOA plan that has been drafted for submission to DESE (by August 1, 2024).



## **Executive Summary**

From 2024-2027, Hilltown will target students with disabilities for accelerated improvement. The district has chosen to focus on two areas: 1.) promoting students' physical and mental health and wellness in welcoming, affirming, and safe spaces; and 2.) implementing a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that helps all students progress both academically and in their social, emotional, and behavioral development. The district has chosen two evidence-based programs to address disparities in learning experiences and outcomes for students with disabilities. The first is enhanced support for social and emotional learning and mental health. The second is implementing key systems to build an effective approach to MTSS.

## **Executive Summary**

By June 2027, Hilltown's health and wellness curriculum in all grades, K-8, will increase in scope and frequency. Weekly advisory lessons focused on SEL will be implemented in grades 6-8. Professional learning will primarily focus on SEL and mental health, including how to maintain a trauma-informed school environment. A new School Data Team will be in place to engage in inclusive data-driven decision-making related to school climate. Added administrative capacity will allow The Director of Teaching and Learning to provide significantly more instructional support to teachers.

## **Executive Summary**

The new Student Behavior Support Coordinator will effectively address Tier 2 student behaviors school-wide. Added capacity for the Response-to-Supports program will provide crucial information about how to support students to engage in learning. All of these strategies have been designed to remove barriers to learning and engagement experienced by students with disabilities

## Data Analysis

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is committed to ensuring all of our students achieve success in school, and we work to close achievement gaps among student subgroups. Looking at data trends over the last three years—including MCAS, Fastbridge aReading and aMath, and attendance—tells us that not all student groups are currently experiencing the same level of success. Our students with disabilities have higher rates of chronic absenteeism and lower achievement and growth scores on MCAS and Fastbridge assessments in ELA and mathematics compared to their non-disabled peers.

## **Data Analysis**

Hilltown staff members are working hard on several fronts to close achievement and opportunity gaps for students with disabilities. In the next three years, we see this work happening through direct student services, classroom support staff, family engagement strategies, and professional development. Hilltown has historically staffed every classroom with a teaching assistant who is responsible to support the classroom teacher with content support, classroom management, and targeted student supports. This staffing structure will continue.

## **Data Analysis**

In addition, Hilltown has increased the number of special education teaching assistants who are responsible to provide supports and services that are embedded in students' IEPs under the supervision of a special education teacher. This structure will also continue, and may increase based on levels of need.

## **Data Analysis**

In 2024, Hilltown updated its attendance policy for clarity and consistency. The director of teaching and learning is responsible to communicate regularly with families of students who are not meeting attendance expectations, and to work collaboratively with them to support student attendance. Since the pandemic-related disruptions, Hilltown has had an increase in absences related to student anxiety and mental health issues. The school adjustment counselor is a key support in terms of helping students and families to be able to be present and access school activities and services.

## **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

A core tenet of Hilltown's mission is to sustain a strong community of students, staff, families and local community members that guide and support the school and its educational program. We prioritize family engagement as essential to ensuring success for all students, and have a full-time Community and Family Engagement Coordinator on staff. Family members are welcome to come into the school at any time to meet with administrators, visit classrooms, or assist with projects. Caregivers of our youngest students are invited to walk their children to their classrooms on designated days, and to participate in arrival activities.



## **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

Older students' parents are invited to stay with students while they wait for school to start each morning, and as they sign out each afternoon. These opportunities for casual contact among parents and with teachers help build a sense of natural connection. We publish a weekly e-newsletter that goes to all parents and any grandparents who request it. The school hosts many family events throughout the year that are scheduled at various times to ensure access. Parents are included in every hiring process when teacher openings arise, and a parent representative is a required part of hiring committees

## **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

We measure family engagement through attendance tracking at events, Board of Trustees and BoT committee meeting attendance and notes, and an annual satisfaction survey that is sent to all parents. These data collection tools will include questions that allow for disaggregation of relevant subgroups.

## **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

Hilltown consistently seeks to effectively engage the families of students with disabilities.

The school supports a parent-led Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) through which parents can advise the Board of Trustees on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, and engage in planning with school leaders to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the district's special education programs.

## **Engage Families/Caregivers and other Stakeholders**

We promote participation in our parent-led SEPAC through emails and a dedicated space in the weekly newsletter. We conscientiously plan family programs and teacher conferences to accommodate a variety of work schedules. Parents make up most of our Board of Trustees, and are involved in all governance committees. This includes the JEDI Committee, which is focused on promoting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in our school.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

Hilltown currently provides health and wellness lessons to students in all grades taught by the school nurse and school adjustment counselor; however, these lessons cover only the basics and leave out many important topics. In terms of mental health, the curriculum includes conflict resolution and problemsolving; bullying prevention; self-awareness, self-regulation, and relationships; equity topics (e.g., LGBTQ+, race/racism); sexual harassment; and healthy relationships.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

In 2023-2024, teachers in grades 6-8 piloted the first year of an advisory program with weekly topics organized around the “CASEL 5” framework from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (casel.org): self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Advisory will continue to be a weekly period for grades 6-8 in future years.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

Hilltown partners with the River Valley Counseling Center to make high-quality therapy available to students on-site during school hours. Hilltown faculty members and support staff participate in professional development focused on SEL and mental health. Hilltown has a Mental Health Team that meets weekly, and includes school leaders, the adjustment counselor, and school nurse.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

The district added a new, full-time administrative position in April 2024 to provide Tier 2 behavioral supports in all grades K-8. This Student Behavior Support Coordinator role adds significant capacity to the administrative team, and allows the Director of Teaching and Learning to focus on curriculum, instruction, and student supports.



# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

A collaborative team of administrators, teachers, and parents developed a “Safe and Supportive Schools” action plan for 2024-2025 and beyond that includes adding a School Data Team, which is responsible to analyze social-emotional-behavioral data from students and families, support for Student Voice groups in grades 6-8, and a Professional Learning Advisory Team that supports teacher and staff input into Hilltown’s professional development activities and supports.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

By June 2027, Hilltown's health and wellness curriculum will increase in scope and frequency, and be more aligned to the new DESE Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks. The advisory curriculum team will have developed three full years of weekly plans so as not to repeat activities as students progress through grades 6-8. Hilltown faculty members and support staff will continue to participate in professional development focused on SEL and mental health, including how to maintain a trauma-informed school environment.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

Overall, the district will engage in more inclusive data-driven decision making, especially in the areas of social-emotional-behavioral wellness, through the School Data Team. The Director of Teaching and Learning will provide significantly more instructional support to teachers due to added administrative capacity focused on student behavior.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

These changes will benefit all students; however, they are critical with regard to addressing outcomes for students with disabilities. This population of students at Hilltown has been more significantly affected by mental health challenges brought on by the pandemic period. For example, a student may have a specific learning disability in reading that is being addressed through targeted services and accommodations on their IEP; however, this student is now experiencing increased anxiety about overall school performance that affects their ability to engage in learning far beyond their reading disability. This student may also be struggling with social dynamics and peer relationships, and this also affects their ability to engage in school.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

These factors lead to the student beginning to avoid school due to mental health issues, and have increased absences or even require a home/hospital arrangement as a result. This pattern has been noticeable at Hilltown over the past two years. Additional mental health resources, school climate supports, student behavior coordination, and added administrative capacity focused on teaching and learning will benefit students with disabilities more than students who do not have disabilities because they are more vulnerable to the social and emotional challenges students are currently experiencing.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

Hilltown uses a Response-to-Supports (RTS) system to design and track the effectiveness of students' academic and behavioral supports. Most of the RTS discussions occur within regular grade-level Student Support Team (SST) meetings. Many appropriate supports occur for students, but data analysis and progress monitoring are areas that could use more time and resources. In

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

In April 2024, Hilltown added a student behavior support coordinator (SBSC) position to the administrative team. This position added significant school capacity for Tier 2 behavior supports (e.g., behavior incentive plans, check-in/check-out systems), as well as meaningful harm repair and restorative practices.

# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

By June 2027, the SBSC will continue to manage daily student behavior supports and responses in collaboration with teachers. This position will also fully manage the RTS process for all behavioral supports, including facilitating discussions, supporting data collection and analysis, using data to make decisions, and maintaining accurate records.



# Select Evidence Based Programs to Address Disparities in Outcomes

Improvements to the RTS process and RTS capacity will benefit students with disabilities in two primary ways. First, the RTS process often provides a means for teams of educators to examine students' learning challenges more closely. This can lead to referring a student for additional educational testing, and sometimes to a referral for a special education evaluation. Close attention to student needs in the context of RTS provides crucial information about how to support them in school. Second, improved behavior supports in all classrooms and school settings will improve overall school climate, which will remove barriers to learning and engagement experienced by students with disabilities.

# Funding

\$ 1,143,631.00 \* What is the anticipated amount of funding that will be allocated to this EBP for the next three years (FY25 + FY26 + FY27), across all funding sources? Total included should be cumulative.

\* Describe the anticipated allocation of funds to this EBP in more detail.

- School nurse
- School adjustment counselor
- Student behavior support coordinator
- Advisory curriculum development and implementation (Purples and Prisms teachers and stipends)
- Classroom teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Special Education teachers
- SE TAs

# Progress Monitoring

What metrics will your district use to monitor progress in this EBP?

- Student attendance
- Progress reports (general education and special education)
- Health, wellness curriculum delivery
- Student school climate survey - related questions

**Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter**

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

1 Industrial Parkway  
Easthampton, MA 01027

Kathleen Hulton, Board of Trustees President  
413-529-7178, [khulton@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:khulton@hilltowncharter.org)

Approved by the HCCPS Board of Trustees on June 24, 2024

July 31, 2024

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School			
Type of Charter (Commonwealth or Horace Mann)	Commonwealth	Location (Municipality)	Easthampton
Regional or Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region (if applicable)	Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Central Berkshire Regional, Easthampton, Erving, Frontier Regional, Gateway Regional, Gill Montague Regional, Granby, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Hawlemont Regional, Leverett, Mohawk Regional, New Salem-Wendell, Northampton, Orange (Mahar Regional), Pioneer Valley Regional, South Hadley, Ware
Year Opened	1995	Year(s) Renewed (if applicable)	2000, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2020
Maximum Enrollment	218	Projected Enrollment for 2024-25	218
Chartered Grade Span	K-8	Grade Span for 2024-25	K-8
Number of Instructional Days for the 2024-25 School Year	180	Students on Initial Waitlist for 2024-25	186
School Hours for the 2024-25 School Year	8:15-3 Mon-Fri; Grades K-5 dismiss 12:30 on Wed	Age of School in 2024-25	29
<p><b>Mission Statement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To involve young people in a school that uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies, to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.</li> <li>To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, that guide and support the school and its educational programs.</li> <li>To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.</li> </ul>			

## FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER

### CRITERION 1: MISSION AND KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

1. Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) has created and sustained an interconnected community of children and adults with a high degree of family involvement:
  - a. In the 2023-2024 school year, we returned to all of our in-person community events. Students continued to have multiple cross-age experiences through All School, buddies, and mini-courses. These experiences strengthened their familiarity with students and staff throughout the school.
  - b. HCCPS employs diverse strategies to cultivate family involvement and strong connections to the school. The Community and Family Engagement Coordinator involves parents in different aspects

- of the school. Weekly and monthly parent and family events are included in the school-year schedule. A weekly e-newsletter ensures that parents have access to all pertinent information.
- c. There are regular opportunities for volunteering both in the classroom and for school wide events, large and small.
  - d. Results from our 2023-2024 Family Satisfaction survey showed that we rebuilt community relations that were impacted by the pandemic. We will continue to focus on community, so that all of our families feel a strong sense of togetherness and belonging.
2. Students at HCCPS learn through a hands-on, experiential, interdisciplinary approach to learning with an emphasis on the arts:
    - a. Staff time is designed and organized to ensure that classroom teachers and teachers in the arts have weekly or biweekly meeting time dedicated to planning integrated curriculum.
    - b. The master school schedule prioritizes students' weekly contact with art and music teachers throughout the year.
    - c. Every classroom participates in several multidisciplinary units annually, incorporating art, music, and hands-on projects. Our website includes archives of integrated projects done throughout the years.
  3. Hilltown successfully cultivates children's curiosity, critical thinking, and individual voice:
    - a. Morning meetings in all grades, K-8, are a place for students and staff members to build community and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Students in grades 6-8 added a weekly 50-minute advisory period in the 2023-2024 school year where they explore topics related to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Advisory plans are structured around a circle format and routines.
    - b. Teachers in all grades build opportunities for students to hone critical thinking skills in all subject areas. Students develop their individual voices through persuasive writing, and engage in respectful discourse by listening to each other and making and supporting evidence-based claims. All students have regular opportunities to share their work and perform in front of the entire school at All School gatherings. Eighth graders prepare culminating research projects based on a topic of their choosing, and present them to the entire school community.
    - c. Students in grades 7 and 8 have regular opportunities to share information and engage in discussions about school climate and culture with the school adjustment counselor and intern in "Student Voice" sessions. These sessions evolved into gender-based discussion groups that included teachers and our new student behavior support coordinator. The Community and Family Engagement Coordinator initiated planning with Prisms students for a new Student Council that will include students in grades 6-8.
  4. Students at Hilltown develop strong foundational skills:
    - a. HCCPS teachers assess the development of students' foundational skills through a universal social-emotional-behavioral screening (mySAEBRS), nationally-normed assessments in reading and mathematics (Fastbridge), MCAS, and internal assessments.
    - b. On multiple assessments, our students' foundational skills are consistently above average.
  5. Hilltown uses a consensus-based governance structure:
    - a. During orientation, all Board members are trained in the consensus process which is used by the Board throughout the year.
    - b. Faculty and staff members, while not bound by a formal consensus process, honor its spirit by valuing open discussion and including all opinions.

## Amendments

Date Submitted	Amendment Requested	Pending or Approved?
10/22/2020	Accountability Plan	Approved
7/18/2022	The Community and Family Engagement Coordinator (previously the Director of Community and Family Engagement) will report to the Director of Administration instead of the Board of Trustees	Approved
6/26/2023	To align the school bylaws with the newly approved complaint procedure by removing the following language from the bylaws: "The Vice President is also responsible for facilitating the complaint procedure." (page 7)	Approved
6/26/2023	To change the language from "parent" to "parent/legal Guardian" regarding membership in the cooperative and eligibility for board membership in the following places in the school's bylaws,	Approved

## CRITERION 2: ACCESS AND EQUITY

### Recruitment and Retention Plan

Openings and Applications Received for School Year		
School Year	Openings	Applications Received
2020-2021	35	270
2021-2022	41	276
2022-2023	40	279
2023-2024	41	258
2024-2025	40	237*

\*We are still in the process of collecting applications for the 2024-2025 school year and anticipate that we will receive at least 10 more over the school year.

Interest in Hilltown remains strong. Over the last five years, we received over 250 applications each year for an average of 40 spots for each school year. We continue enrolling more students with learning disabilities across all the grade levels, with a significant increase in grades 6-8. Our current rate of 18.9% students with disabilities is above GNT and CI percentages, and is comparable to most area districts.

We continue to look to close the gap on English learners and low income families. We are still in the process of collecting enrollment materials for our incoming students, but the information we have collected so far does not indicate that we will be narrowing the gaps for English learners (ELs). We also do not collect any information about our newly enrolling students' income status before the school year begins.

In April 2023, the Hilltown Board of Trustees approved a Long Range Plan goal that prioritizes Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI). 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 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 critically examines 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.

Lastly, a review of admissions trends shows that we have consistently received fewer applications for grades 7 and 8 than for grades K-6, and those numbers have declined a bit further in recent years. Furthermore, applicants for grades 7 and 8 have been more likely to decline if offered a spot. There have been several years, going back as far as 2017-18, where we have not been able to fill all the openings available in seventh and eighth grade. The table below shows application numbers over the past five years.

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Grade 7 Applications	35	36	24	29	27	25	26
Grade 7 Spots Available	4	7	2	6	2	8	5
Grade 7 Spots Filled	2	6	2	5	2	5	3
Grade 8 Applications	10	5	4	6	6	9	6
Grade 8 Spots Available	4	6	3	3	2	3	4
Grade 8 Spots Filled	2	2	2	2	1	1	2

For the 2024-25 year, we have begun specific outreach and recruitment through social media and the local online newspaper for grades 7th and 8th. We have a supplementary lottery scheduled for July 31, 2024. We will continue to discuss specific recruitment efforts for grades 7 and 8.

### **Specialized Programs and Services**

Information about specialized programs and services to meet the needs of students with disabilities and English learners can be found on the Special Education and English Learners tab on the [Educational Program page of the school website](#).

We also have the following nondiscriminatory statement on all of our recruitment materials, including on our [Admissions page](#):

*Hilltown does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language, or academic achievement.*

[We also share the Massachusetts Primer on Special Education on our website.](#)

[There is a dedicated page to learn about the school that is in Spanish.](#)

Additionally, there is a dedicated area at the top of the home page of the [website](#) that allows for translation into multiple languages.

**Attrition**

Our retention strategies have proven to be successful in achieving our school-wide retention goal. We continue to have small class sizes with low adult: child ratios; frequent parent conferences; active learning strategies; early identification of struggling learners; and early literacy development through the Reading Specialist.

We continue to offer a daily non-academic after-school program. Family engagement opportunities have resumed full implementation since the pandemic. In addition, we continue to provide homework support for students with disabilities, teaching assistants in all classrooms, and extra support in younger grades from the Adjustment Counselor, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, and Student Behavior Coordinator.

Overall, our attrition rates have been lower than the third quartile of comparison for the years 2020-2024 with the exception of students with disabilities (12.1) in 2021.

**Attrition percentages by subgroup and school year**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	2.6	12.1	3.6	3.4	7.7
<b>Low Income</b>	0.0	3.2	6.7	5.0	5.6
<b>High Needs</b>	1.8	7.7	6.5	5.2	4.9
<b>All Students</b>	5.9	4.2	4.8	3.2	9.6

**Discipline**

The most recent publicly available student discipline data may be found on the DESE website in our [2022-23 Student Discipline Data Report](#).

2022-23 Student Discipline					
Student Group	Total Number of Students	Students Disciplined	Percent In-School Suspension	Percent Out-of-School Suspension	Percent Emergency Removal
All Students	221	3	-	-	-
English Learner	0	-	-	-	-
Low Income	50	1	-	-	-
Students w/disabilities	48	2	-	-	-
High needs	80	2	-	-	-
Female	91	0	-	-	-
Male	124	3	-	-	-
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	-	-	-	-
Asian	5	-	-	-	-
African American/Black	0	-	-	-	-
Hispanic/Latino	11	0	-	-	-
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	24	1	-	-	-
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	-	-	-	-
White	181	2	-	-	-

Hilltown has low suspension rates, both in-school and out-of-school. During the 2022-2023 school year, there were three discipline incidents that resulted in out-of-school suspension, and one that resulted in in-school suspension. Hilltown administrators track behavioral incidents and responses, and review those data in order to self-investigate the school's cultural practices.

Hilltown updated its student behavior support system during summer 2023, and used a clearly-defined three-tiered system of support and accountability during the 2023-2024 school year:

- Tier 1) UNIVERSAL supports that benefit all students to function within the classroom;
- Tier 2) TARGETED supports for students who struggle to manage their behavior; and

- Tier 3) EMERGENCY RESPONSE to significantly physically and/or emotionally unsafe or hostile behavior. In addition, Hilltown provides INDIVIDUALIZED supports for students who struggle daily with big emotions and the requirements of school.

The overarching goals of Tier 1 supports are to: support students in a fair and consistent manner to understand and meet expectations; handle off-task and disruptive behavior respectfully, fairly, and consistently to help students get back on track; and build students' self-reflection skills and repair harm to individuals and the community. All staff members: model expectations; reinforce and remind students about expectations; use proximity and visual cues to redirect and remind nonverbally; provide opportunities for self-reflection; teach self-regulation strategies and support students to use them; and point out examples of students meeting expectations. When problematic behavior occurs, staff members: name the behavior; remind about the expectation (avoiding blaming or shaming language/tones); and state the consequence if the behavior continues. Tier 1 consequences may include: move seat/work area/activity; loss of relevant activities, materials, or equipment; break it/fix it; loss of computer privileges; loss of privilege to work independently in common spaces; restricted space at recess; recess in an alternate location with an adult available to discuss behavior; or community service (e.g., helping in the classroom). Staff members ask restorative questions when incidents occur in order to facilitate restorative dialogue and harm repair between students, and to help those affected. If the behavior is part of an emerging pattern, a staff member informs parents and enlists their support. Staff members also inform parents about successes and resolutions and when things are going well.

Sometimes student behavior is significantly disruptive, prevents others from engaging in activities, and requires additional adult support, which elevates the incident to Tier 2. In these cases, all involved staff members use the same Tier 1 tools and strategies to address student behavior. After the challenging behavior has been resolved, the initiating staff member and a director/coordinator engage in a follow-up conversation with the student to: remind about expectations (e.g., the Code of Cooperation, and school-wide rules); state the consequence if the behavior occurs in the future; work with the student to identify supportive strategies; and discuss harm repair options (if applicable). After a Tier 2-level incident, a staff member informs parents and enlists their support. Teachers reintegrate the student into school activities, and inform parents about successes and resolutions.

To address patterns of challenging behavior, teachers develop proactive strategies ahead of time with support from a director or service provider (e.g., the adjustment counselor). For example: regular check-ins to reinforce expectations; scheduled opportunities for structured reflection; or a behavior incentive plan. Beginning in April 2024, Hilltown added administrative capacity with a new full-time student behavior support coordinator position who is primarily responsible for Tier 2 behavior supports.

If student behavior occurs that is significantly physically and/or emotionally unsafe or hostile, involves harassment, involves violence, physical or verbal assault, and/or involves a weapon or a controlled substance, the nearest staff member requests immediate support. A director or coordinator will move the student(s) to a safe space (or otherwise ensure adult supervision), then convene all or part of a Response Team to manage the incident, collect information, and determine next steps. The Response Team includes the director of teaching and learning, the director of administration, the school nurse, and the adjustment counselor. In fall 2023, the Response Team also included the behaviorist, and in spring 2023 this position was replaced on the team by the new student behavior support coordinator.

If the Response Team determines that the student has engaged in behavior that is significant physically and/or emotionally unsafe or hostile, and the continued presence of the student poses a danger to persons or property, or materially and substantially disrupts the order of the educational environment, and there is no alternative available to alleviate the danger or disruption, the next step is emergency removal from school. The director of teaching and learning informs parents and makes arrangements for pick-up as soon as possible.

Emergency removal is followed by a notice of proposed suspension, which describes the disciplinary offense, the basis for the charge, the potential length of the suspension, and an opportunity for the student and parents to

have a suspension hearing with the director of teaching and learning. After the suspension hearing determination and resulting suspension (if applicable), the director of teaching and learning initiates a restorative process to repair harm to individuals and the community. Any restorative process requires voluntary participation from all parties. Students are welcomed back and reintegrated into school activities after all disciplinary actions. Parents are informed about the outcome of any restorative process.

When a student is known to have significant behavioral challenges, staff members develop proactive strategies and response plans with support from a director and special education or service provider, and with parent input and collaboration. These strategies may include more intensive and/or frequent Tier 1 strategies, a behavior incentive plan, a Behavior Support Plan (typically developed after student observations under the guidance of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst), or an established crisis plan.

### **Equal Rights of Access**

Hilltown routinely considers and remedies barriers to equal access in all areas of curricular, extracurricular, and community programming. Team and collaborative meeting structures allow Hilltown leaders and staff members to ensure all students have equitable access to programs and services. This includes: Student Support Team (SST) meetings, curriculum integration meetings, Teacher Meetings, Mental Health Team, Special Education and Related Services (SERS) team, and grade-level common planning time. This ensures a balance of academic and behavioral needs are considered in contexts that ensure multiple perspectives. School programs, systems, and structures are considered from an equity perspective by the Board of Trustees' JEDI Committee, and the staff Equity Team. Hilltown supports a parent-led Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) that advises the BoT on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities, and meets regularly with school leaders to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of special education programs. Additional details about these teams can be found in "Key Indicator 8.2: Professional Climate and Standards for Performance."

Structures that support collaboration and relationship-building support equitable access to school programs. For example, teachers work collaboratively, with input from parents and caregivers, to assign students to class groups each year. This means that class groups—all of which are heterogeneously grouped by design—are created by adults who know students well, ensures equitable distribution of strengths, needs, and demographics (i.e., race, ethnicity, dis/ability, gender) across classrooms, and that students' social and emotional priorities are supported. The school's mixed-age classroom and activity structures ensure students and families have rich opportunities to build relationships that transcend students' ages and sending districts. Field experiences and trips are typically funded by the school budget and fundraising efforts. No student is denied access to a school trip due to an inability to pay. Transportation for field trips is often provided by parent volunteers to save costs, and this also enables family participation in touchstone activities related to the curriculum.

Hilltown is committed to ensuring that all students have access to the materials and resources necessary to participate fully in school programs. The school calendar is intentionally aligned with that of Easthampton Public Schools (where we are located) in order to provide school bus service for all Hilltown students who live in Easthampton. For students who are not eligible for bussing, we offer an interactive carpool map that allows families to connect with each other to share transportation. Hilltown has also arranged a public bus stop at school at dismissal time through the Pioneer Valley Transportation Authority (PVTA). For technological resources, Hilltown provides individual Chromebooks to all students in grades 3-8, which are allowed to be used at home in grades 6-8 when home study and student-teacher communication starts to necessitate this resource.

We have recently sought to understand more about how best to ensure family access to information. This work has included adding relevant questions to the annual Parent Satisfaction Surveys, as well as creating and implementing additional communications surveys and structured interviews during the 2022-2023 school year. Data suggested that families benefit from a range of communication and information tools. The most comprehensive communication tool is a weekly, electronic email (Hilltown Happenings) that is sent to all families and staff members. This newsletter includes upcoming events, school program highlights, announcements and reminders, events, volunteering opportunities, Board of Trustees news, SEPAC notices, social and emotional learning

resources, thank you notes, and fundraising efforts. Any Hilltown community member is able to post personalized ads and announcements that are of interest to the community at the end of each newsletter. Another significant communication tool is weekly class updates sent to parents from teachers in grades K-5. Teachers in the upper grades use Google Classroom to organize and communicate about assignments and other schoolwork. Hilltown regularly updates its website, which is designed to be outward-facing for the community at large. It also supports online Google Calendars for the general public and staff. Parents may access all school records (e.g., progress reports, MCAS results, etc.) in an online portal through the school's student data management system.

Hilltown offers several fee-based extracurricular programs. This includes Chorus, Hilltown Harmonies singing group, rock band, Kaleidoscope theater, the school musical, the annual Mummers' Play, and two sports teams (cross country, and Ultimate Frisbee). In addition, Kids' Club provides after-school care five days per week, including extended day care for students in grades K-5 when those grades have Wednesday half-days. Hilltown also offers free childcare during all evening meetings and events. A reduced fee for all of these programs is automatically available for students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and the fee is waived in some cases due to demonstrated need. In all cases, no one is turned away for lack of funds.

### **CRITERION 3: COMPLIANCE**

At our last visit, four teachers beyond their first year of employment had not passed the required MTEs. Three of those teachers have since left, and one who is currently still employed at Hilltown has taken one MTEL, and will take another one in the fall. In addition, we currently have three teachers who are actively taking MTEs.

**CRITERION 4: DISSEMINATION**

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2023-2024	Interview questions and techniques for new teachers	Practice interviews for students at Smith College, and panel discussion of interviewing strategies	Director of Teaching and Learning	Students in the Smith College teacher preparation program School administrators from Buckland-Sheilburne Regional School District, Veritas Prep Charter School, Springfield Prep Charter School, Springfield Public Schools	Teachers new to the field gained interview experience and learned about the HCCPS program and hiring practices. HCCPS strengthened connections with area public and charter schools.
2023-2024	Use of primary sources, and hands-on, experiential learning	Preservice teachers visited grade 2-3 classrooms for weeks and presented a method of inquiry related to science and social studies. Hilltown students created and shared presentations with participants that incorporated elements of the inquiry method	Two Grade 2-3 Lead Teachers	Preservice teachers from Westfield State University (WSU)	WSU Students took their experience in Hilltown's classrooms back to share with other preservice teachers
2023-2024	Strategies to integrate arts and STEM in elementary bilingual/dual language programs	Published book: "Integrando STEAM: A Guide for Elementary Bilingual and Dual Language Programs"	Visual Arts Teachers grades 2-8	UMass Amherst College of Education students	Preservice teachers and educators across Massachusetts and beyond have a resource for arts-integration in bilingual/dual language programs

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2023-2024	Visual arts curriculum planning and implementation, arts integration, classroom management, teacher/staff collaboration	Hosted student teacher, visual arts	Visual Arts Teacher grades 2-8	Preservice visual arts teacher from UMass Amherst	A teacher new to the field gained curriculum and classroom experience, and learned about the HCCPS program
2023-2024	Visual arts curriculum implementation, arts integration, classroom management	Hosted Smith College Mindich Fellow	Visual Arts Teacher grades 2-8	Undergraduate student from Smith College	A college student who is interested in pursuing education as a career gained classroom experience, and learned about the HCCPS program
2022-2023	Arts-integrated tradition for building community with new families and within mixed-age classrooms	Virtual visit to meeting of kindergarten teachers in Frontier Regional and Union 38 School District	Grades K-1 Classroom Teacher	Frontier Regional and Union 38 School District kindergarten teachers (from Sunderland, Conway, Deerfield and Whately Elementary) attended the meeting.	As a result of meeting with the HCCPS teacher, current FRU38 kindergartners will write and illustrate informational text, in the form of a guidebook, to help new kindergartners and their families know what to expect and look forward to about starting school in their new classroom.
2022-2023	Mathematics instructional practices and curriculum	Classroom observations and teacher-to-teacher meetings	Grades K-1 Classroom Teacher Grades 4-5 Classroom Teacher Grades 2-3 Classroom Teacher	Frontier Regional and Union 38 School District teachers from Sunderland, Conway, Deerfield and Whately Elementary	As a result of observing in HCCPS classrooms, and speaking with HCCPS teachers, FRU38 elementary level teachers have first-hand information that will inform their selection of mathematics curriculum in the district.



School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2022-2023	Mathematics instructional practices and curriculum	Classroom observations and teacher meetings	Grades 4-5 Classroom Teacher Grades 2-3 Classroom Teacher	Warwick Community School and District superintendent	As a result of observing in HCCPS classrooms, and speaking with HCCPS teachers, the Warwick Community School and District superintendent has first-hand information that will inform their selection of mathematics curriculum in the district.
2022-2023	Interview questions and techniques for new teachers	Practice interviews for students at Smith College, and panel discussion of interviewing strategies	Director of Teaching and Learning	Students in the Smith College teacher preparation program School administrators from Buckland-Shelburne Regional School District, Campus School of Smith College, Veritas Prep Charter School, Springfield Charter School	As a result of participation in this event, teachers new to the field gained interview experience, and learned about the HCCPS program and hiring practices. HCCPS strengthened connections with area public, charter, and independent schools.
2022-2023	Arts-integration strategies and programs	DESE Charter School Update, Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign DESE Commissioner's Weekly Update	Director of Teaching and Learning	Public school and charter public school leaders and educators across Massachusetts	As a result of sharing promising practices in the arts and arts-integration, public school leaders and educators across the state learned about the ways that HCCPS prioritizes arts learning in its curriculum and structures, and integrates arts across the curriculum
2022-2023	Public School Finance Management	Mount Holyoke Economics of Education Classes (Embedded Practitioner)	Director of Administration	Undergraduate students at Mount Holyoke College	College undergraduates learned about charter schools, focusing on admissions, finance, staffing models, the school's mission and the impact of COVID and steps that are being taken to support students following a pandemic. Dissemination included undergraduate students touring Hilltown and observing classes.

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
2021-2022	Critical Exploration of Local History Resources	Material Development	Two grades 2-3 teachers	The David Ruggles Center Florence MA	Our second and third grade classes collaborated with the David Ruggles Center on a study of "Local Heroes of the Underground Railroad". We developed a scavenger hunt to identify artifacts at the David Ruggles Center and around Florence center which led us to places like Sojourner Truth's home and The Hill Institute, named for Samuel Hill. The scavenger hunt and other resource we shared with the Ruggles Center will be available for future elementary visitors. Volunteers at the David Ruggles center acted as docents and led our walking tour using our developed materials.
2021-2022	Integration	Recorded discussion	All Teachers	Discussion was recorded and posted on the school website	Visitors to our website can access student work and information about our integration model. They can see specific integration projects across grade levels, and how these projects deepen content area learning in developmentally appropriate ways for each grade. There is evidence of collaboration between art, theater and classroom teachers in these projects.
2021-2022	Mixed age classrooms	Fellowship for Intern, Student Teacher	Grades K/1 teacher	Westfield State University, Elms College, UMass	Our intern and student teachers created and implemented lesson plans to meet the needs of mixed age classrooms and shared and reflected on their experiences in their college coursework.
2020-2021	Mixed age classrooms, arts integration, student support team	Internship program hosted five graduate students from three colleges	Atelier teacher Two grades K-1 teachers Adjustment Counselor Yellow's teaching assistant	Smith College School of Social Work in Northampton, MA Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, MA Springfield College in Springfield, MA	Two interns graduated from their programs and became teachers in local public schools.  Artifacts include notes from integration meetings, documentation of curriculum projects, and student support team meetings.

School Year Dissemination Occurred	Best Practice Shared	Vehicle for Dissemination	Who at the school was involved with dissemination efforts?	With whom did the school disseminate its best practices?	Result of Dissemination
			Director of Teaching & Learning Special education teachers		
2020-2021	Arts Integration	We shared this practice by posting materials on our website.	Atelier teachers, music teachers, Atelier teaching assistant	Visitors to website	The website has an Integration Archive to share project planning notes as well as project artifacts such as slide shows, videos, and photographs.
2020-2021	Mini Courses	Teachers were guest speakers in a Mount Holyoke College course, then hosted MHC students for service learning projects	Teaching Assistants PE teacher Logistics and Kids' Club Coordinator Director of Teaching and Learning	Mount Holyoke College students	Mount Holyoke students learned about our minicourse model from teachers visiting their college course. Then, college students had the option of working with us on a project for social justice/change. One student evaluated the school's website for bias and representation. Five students assisted in online mini courses for three weeks. Notes from their mini courses and from the audit of our website are lasting artifacts.



# ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS

## CRITERION 5: STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Hilltown uses MCAS results as well as Fastbridge aReading and aMath screening assessment data, and DIBELS 8th Edition data to gauge students' academic performance against external, standardized measures. These data allow the director of teaching and learning and others to make connections to programmatic strengths and areas for improvement.

### Statewide Assessments

Hilltown's average MCAS scaled scores generally fall in the 500-point range (the cutoff for meeting expectations) in all subject areas, both for the district as a whole, and at each grade level 3-8. MCAS scores were relatively stable overall from 2022 to 2023 with a few exceptions. There was a significant decrease in growth in sixth grade ELA (63 to 50 average SGP), a significant increase in growth in eighth grade ELA (43 to 54 average student growth percentile), and a significant increase in achievement in fifth grade Math (491 to 507 average scaled score). Grade 6 is an entry point in Hilltown's enrollment system, with up to one third of sixth grade students new to the district, which potentially explains the significant decline in growth. Students in grades 5 and 8 tend to have been at the school for at least three years.

Due to low numbers, disaggregated data for 2022 and 2023 are not available at the grade level for BIPoC students, students with disabilities, low income, and Title I, which prevents comparisons based on race and ethnicity, dis/ability, and socio-economic status. Hilltown did not enroll any English Learner (EL) students in 2022 or 2023. There were opportunities to compare student achievement in 2023 based on gender in grades 6-8, but not growth. Male- and female-identifying students had similar average scaled scores (i.e., a difference of 5 points or less) in ELA, Math, and Science/Technology/Engineering with the exceptions of sixth grade ELA (average scaled score of 503 for Females and 496 for Males), and seventh grade math (average scaled score of 486 for Females and 503 for Males). There was also an opportunity to compare high needs students to all students in grades 7 and 8. In every case, the average scaled score for all students was 10 or more points higher than that for high need students. See Appendix D, Tables A-C for additional detail related to 2023 MCAS scores.

### Non-statewide Assessments

Hilltown currently uses DIBELS 8th Edition in grades K-3 to check students' reading competencies, and has used Fastbridge aReading and aMath screening assessments in grades 3-8 since fall 2022. DIBELS subtests include: letter naming fluency, phonemic segmentation fluency, nonsense word fluency, word reading fluency, and oral reading fluency. The Fastbridge universal screeners are computer-administered and adaptive. The reading assessment targets concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension in grades 3-5, and orthography, morphology, vocabulary, and comprehension in grades 6-8. The math assessment includes counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, number and operations, measurement and data, and geometry. Hilltown does not use standardized assessments for science, technology, or engineering.

Hilltown changed its non-statewide assessment instruments in grades 3-8 twice during the previous renewal cycle (i.e., IOWA in SY20, SAT10 in SY21 and SY22, and Fastbridge in SY23 and SY24). The district plans to continue to use Fastbridge aReading and aMath screeners for the foreseeable future, as they are computer-based, adaptive, and easy to administer three times throughout the year. Teachers and administrators appreciate the timely data these assessments provide with regard to designing instructional changes and individualized supports. Due these changes, outcomes and trends described in this section focus on data from SY23 and SY24.

Hilltown students in grades K-3 are making progress toward reading competency targets based on end-of-year DIBELS assessments. Over half of Kindergarten students (55%) did not meet the composite competency benchmark in June 2023, and this decreased significantly to 25% after students completed grade 1. In 2024, 80% of

Kindergarten students met the target. There was one exception to this trend in that two students who had met the target in grade 1 in 2023 scored just below it in grade 2 in 2024. An additional student who did not meet the grade 2 target was new to the school. See Appendix D, Tables D and E for additional data related to DIBELS scores.

Hilltown students in grades 3-8 are relatively strong in reading compared to math based on Fastbridge scores. In spring 2024, the average national percentile in reading for each grade level ranged from 66 to 73, and from 57 to 69 in math. Hilltown's average national percentiles for grade-level growth in reading and math were consistently below 50 (with the exception of grade 3 reading, which was at 61, and grade 6 math, which was at 54). In SY23 and SY24, there was evidence that students in all grades who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are achieving at lower levels in reading and math than students who are on 504 plans or do not have a plan. The same pattern was evident—although gaps were less significant—regarding lower levels of achievement in reading and math for BIPoC students compared to white students. See Appendix D, Tables F and G for additional detail related to Fastbridge scores.

### **Action Steps to Improve Academic Achievement**

Hilltown has consistently provided a high level of student academic support through specialized staffing structures and instructional practices. Strong, grade-appropriate instruction with scaffolds designed to address challenges are in place. In addition, special education teachers and teaching assistants provide individualized instruction, and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. Hilltown's Response-to-Supports (RTS) process functions as a means to address students' learning challenges. See "Key Indicator 6.4: Supports for All Learners" for additional details about Hilltown's structures and systems.

Over the past few years, Hilltown has reorganized special education staffing to be more collaborative and responsive to student needs. Grades 6-8 currently share special education teachers and teaching assistants, which allows students to be assigned based on specific needs (e.g., a student may receive reading support from a teacher who is trained in this area, and behavioral support from a different teacher who has this skill set). Grades K-5 also share special education staff. Since 2022, Hilltown has added three full-time special education teaching assistant positions based on identified student needs.

Student social, emotional, and behavioral needs continue to be of high concern post-pandemic, and a significant amount of staff support is dedicated to enabling students to be available to learn and participate in classroom activities with peers. Hilltown updated its multi-tiered system of supports for student behavior during summer 2023, then engaged in a collaborative process to examine the sustainability of the director of teaching and learning position, which has historically overseen curriculum and instruction as well as student behavior. This process resulted in Hilltown adding administrative capacity in April 2024 by hiring a new, full-time student behavior support coordinator to enable consistent and proactive Tier 2 support for grades K-8. The added capacity will support the director of teaching and learning to focus more fully on teacher supervision, curriculum, and instructional coaching.

Hilltown administrators and teachers have been examining equity issues that may be affecting student achievement. For example, concerns about belonging and inclusion for students and families of color surfaced through the school's 2022 equity audit. In 2023, Hilltown received a grant to engage in DESE's Safe and Supportive Schools (SaSS) action planning program. This entailed diligent work by a representative team of stakeholders (i.e., directors, administrative staff, educators, parents) to reflect on essential systems, structures, and practices that enable safe and supportive school environments for all students and families. The team considered qualitative and quantitative data from a wide range of sources, including the 2022 equity audit, spring 2023 and winter 2024 results from a new Student School Climate Survey, and spring 2023 results from an updated annual Family Satisfaction Survey. Major themes that surfaced through the SaSS self-reflection process indicated a need to create intentional and inclusive data analysis and use systems, and to increase a sense of belonging and inclusion across the community, especially for BIPoC students and families. The SaSS team developed an action plan for 2024-2025 and beyond that supports creating a School Data Team that includes representatives from key stakeholder groups

(including students), supporting structured opportunities for student voice, and creating a professional development advisory team to identify priorities for the coming year, and ensure professional learning is relevant and implemented.

## **CRITERION 6: PROGRAM DELIVERY**

### **Key Indicator 6.1: Curriculum**

Hilltown teachers provide relevant and engaging curriculum following state frameworks and standards, and upholding tenets of our charter: integrating arts, cultivating individual voices, building community, and putting learning into the hands of students. Teachers identify overarching learning objectives to help students recognize themes, patterns, and connections within and among daily lessons.

Hilltown has consistently implemented set reading, writing, and mathematics curriculum for the past several years. This includes “Being a Reader” from Collaborative Classroom in grades K-5 and a standards-aligned, teacher-created ELA curriculum in grades 6-8. In grades K-5, teachers use “Being a Writer” from Collaborative Classroom, supplemented by independent book groups, and integrated writing assignments related to social studies and science projects. Hilltown has been using the “Illustrative Math” curriculum for six years in grades 6-8, and for three years in grades K-5. Teachers supplement mathematics instruction through resources including Math 180, 3-Act Math, Esti-Mysteries, and daily routines during morning meetings.

Hilltown has many teacher-created K-8 social studies and science curriculum units, which often serve as opportunities for arts-integration as well as lessons and materials that represent a variety of cultures and perspectives. Integrated topics in the 2023-2024 school year included the social and economic impacts of sugar, our watery world, country studies, metamorphosis, plant biology, ancient Greece, civics and government, and the physical geography of western Massachusetts. Teachers supplement units with standards-aligned published curriculum such as Mystery Science, History’s Mysteries (iCivics), Learning for Justice, and Facing History and Ourselves. On Fridays during All School gatherings, students share their academic and arts work with the entire community one classroom or grade-level per week.

All students in grades K-8 participate in Atelier (art), Music & Movement, Health and Wellness, and Physical Education one or two times per week. Curriculum in these subjects is also based on state frameworks with efforts to integrate arts with the academic curriculum. Students in grades 6-8 participate in digital media and technology classes twice per week. Students in grades 7 and 8 take Spanish classes three times per week. The two-year sequence roughly equates to a one-year level 1 course.

In the 2022-2023 school year, a representative group of teacher leaders and the Director of Teaching and Learning compared Hilltown’s existing science and social studies curriculum units in grades K-8 to the most current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks to identify gaps and overlaps. The school’s current Long Range Plan includes an extensive curriculum review process using a “JEDI” lens (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion), which will move this curriculum review work forward.

### **Key Indicator 6.2: Instruction**

Teachers at Hilltown differentiate instruction with the goal of enabling every student to make progress toward learning objectives, and use principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to create multiple entry points, modes of expression, and assessments that support students with diverse learning profiles. While the primary learning objectives are not differentiated, students access content and skills via multiple pathways. Lessons and units include opportunities for students to explore topics and apply learning in culturally relevant, authentic, and real-world contexts, and the products of their learning reflect their strengths, interests, cultural backgrounds, and prior knowledge. Teachers share criteria for success with students such as checklists, rubrics, and exemplars.

Building positive relationships and students' identities as learners are key features of Hilltown classrooms. Teachers regularly communicate specific and asset-based feedback, reinforce perseverance and effort, and model a growth mindset. They strive to consistently demonstrate positive, caring relationships to ensure all students feel valued, respected, and supported. Teachers intentionally use routines such as Morning Meeting, equitable discourse structures, and collaborative group work to foster a sense of belonging in the classroom community. Teachers define and maintain consistent behavioral expectations and norms, and balance support and accountability when addressing student behavior. Hilltown focuses on restorative dialogue and harm repair when supporting students to navigate and address interpersonal conflicts as they arise.

### **Key Indicator 6.3: Assessment and Program Evaluation**

Hilltown uses multiple forms of assessment to gauge student learning in addition to MCAS. For academic screening, the school has used Fastbridge aReading and aMath assessments in grades 3-8 since the 2022-2023 school year, and screens all students in fall, winter, and spring. Teachers use these checkpoints throughout the year to identify students who need additional supports, and to gauge the effectiveness of delivered supports. The reading specialist screens all students in grades K-3 three times per year using DIBELS 8th Edition. Hilltown implemented the mySAEBRS social-emotional-behavioral screener with all students in grades 3-8 for the first time in 2023-2024, and plans to implement this screener each winter. Results identify students who had not previously been known to have needed social and emotional supports.

Teachers assess student learning using formative and summative assessments in all subject areas that include rubrics, checklists, benchmarks, and unit tests. Hilltown's mathematics curriculum includes daily formative assessment, which teachers use to inform instruction. Special education teachers and related service providers, including the reading specialist, provide services and assess student progress. Teachers in grades K-5 score student writing samples using a standardized, internally-created K-5 Writing Rubric. Teachers in grades 6-8 also use standardized rubrics to score student writing samples, including extensive "capstone" research projects in grade 8.

Collaboration and communication among educators is built into the schedule at Hilltown. Teachers, administrators, and service providers meet weekly or biweekly in Student Support Team (SST) meetings focused on students with academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional concerns. General education teachers and arts teachers also meet weekly or biweekly to plan integrated curriculum units, and to ensure curriculum across subject areas is aligned and mutually-supportive. Grade-level academic teaching teams have common planning time built into the master schedule in addition to SST and integration meetings. The Mental Health Team, which includes the Director of Teaching and Learning, Adjustment Counselor, and School Nurse, meets weekly, and the Special Education and Related Supports (SERS) Team meets monthly or more frequently as needed. These teams are collaborative in nature, and include representatives from a range of educational positions.

### **Key Indicator 6.4: Supports for All Learners**

Hilltown strives to provide access to grade-level work for all students, and targeted scaffolds that make the work accessible. As outlined above, Hilltown has structures in place to ensure strong grade-appropriate instruction with scaffolds provided by classroom teachers and general education teaching assistants for students with identified learning challenges and needs, including students with accommodations and supports outlined in 504 plans. In addition, special education teachers and teaching assistants provide individualized, modified content, and appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

Hilltown provides targeted student support services through specialized staffing structures. Each academic classroom has at least one teaching assistant whose role is to assist the teacher in providing academic and behavioral support to all students, including 504 plan accommodations. In addition, special education teachers and teaching assistants whom they supervise provide supports that are directly related to students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals. After-school Homework Club is available four afternoons per week at no cost to students in grades 6-8 who have IEPs or other identified needs. Reading intervention is available to students, primarily in grades K-3 but also in upper grades, based on need. The reading specialist provides short-term



interventions using the “Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words” (SIPPS) program, a companion to “Being a Reader,” as well as the “Read Naturally” fluency program. Students with more significant reading needs documented in their IEPs receive specialized instruction, such as Orton-Gillingham, implemented by a special education teacher. Four full-time special education teachers provide services and oversight for students who have IEPs in grades K-8.

Hilltown uses a Response-to-Supports (RTS) process. When students are identified by teachers as not meeting expectations based on formative and summative assessments, a group of educators (typically in the context of a Student Support Team meeting) identify a specific challenge to address, develop a goal, recommend supports to be implemented for 6-8 weeks, and then meet to review implementation data and determine the effectiveness of that support. Often, these supports are outlined in the school’s District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Classroom teachers, teaching assistants, the reading specialist, the occupational therapist, the speech therapist, the adjustment counselor, or other relevant staff members implement the identified supports. Parent communication is a key component in the RTS process.

## **CRITERION 7: SCHOOL CLIMATE AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

### **Key Indicator 7.1 Safe and Supportive Environment**

The school ensures that school and classroom environments are safe, supportive, culturally responsive, welcoming, respectful, inclusive, and reflective of the community and students’ cultures and identities. The school creates an environment that supports all students’ sense of belonging and helps students develop social and emotional knowledge, skills, and competencies for a multicultural world.

Hilltown has multiple systems and structures in place to ensure a safe and supportive school environment. School leaders, including the Board of Trustees, have committed to implementing an integrated plan to improve climate, culture, and supports for students, staff, and the community. This commitment is apparent in the HCCPS Long Range Plan, 2023-2028, which identifies three priorities: 1.) cultivating a vibrant culture and community; 2.) weaving justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of the district; and 3.) aligning schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence that meets the developmental needs of our students.

School policies and procedures have been updated over the past few years to be more student-centered, equitable, and unbiased (e.g., significant updates to multi-tiered student behavior support systems). Since August 2022, the primary professional learning focus has been on improving school climate, culture, safety, and social and emotional learning based on the needs of all staff and students. One outcome related to this work is a defined school-wide approach to supporting student behavior that is based on relationship-building, clear norms and expectations, and balancing support with accountability, and an associated “Toolbox” of strategies. Hilltown students and families have access to programs and services through the school (e.g., low- or no-cost extracurricular activities, subsidized hot lunch, and after-school child care), and through partnerships with external service providers (e.g., counseling services provided by the River Valley Counseling Center during school hours). An inclusive group of Hilltown stakeholders participated in DESE’s Safe and Supportive Schools self-reflection and action planning process that resulted in a plan to create inclusive systems to make data-driven organizational decisions, increase student voice, and support professional learning.

### **Key Indicator 7.2**

As part of the mission of our school, Hilltown prioritizes the cultivation of a sense of belonging and partnership among students and families in order to support all students’ ability to engage fully in the learning process, and to achieve at high levels. This was a priority identified through the school’s 2022 equity audit, especially for students and families of color. Since the pandemic-related school closures, Hilltown has engaged in full revitalization of its calendar of events and community engagement opportunities. In addition, the school is supporting “student voice” groups for older students, and continuing to engage in work related to inclusion and belonging through the Board of Trustees’ Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) committee.

When you enter the school, the first area that you see is our designated family corner. This is a place where we encourage all families to access. We also host bi-weekly coffee hours for parents and monthly community engagement events. Some of these events include: family bingo night, family movie night, winter fair, and weekly All School gatherings that all family members are invited to attend.

Our 2023-2024 Family Satisfaction Survey revealed that over ninety percent of families who responded feel connected to the Hilltown community. Ninety percent of the 111 individuals who responded said that they are satisfied with communication around Hilltown community events, including knowing what to expect, how they can help, and when events are happening.

## ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

### CRITERION 8: CAPACITY

#### Key Indicator 8.1: School Systems and Leadership

Over the past five years, the Hilltown Board of Trustees has been evaluating its original unique leadership structure of three Directors reporting to the Board. In 2022, Hilltown changed the reporting structure of the Community and Family Engagement Coordinator so that the Director of Administration supervised this role instead of the Board. This change was made based on feedback from parents, staff, and Board members through a subcommittee that initiated a review of the reporting structure. This review was prompted by the retirement of Deirdre Arthen who had held the role since it was created at Hilltown and the retirement of Daniel Klatz the prior year. (Daniel Klatz was the Director of Administration (2016-2019) and the Director of Teaching and Learning (2001-2016). Kate Saccento, the Academic Support Coordinator and former Hilltown Teacher, was hired as the Director of Administration. Lara Ramsey, Director of Teaching and Learning (2020) resigned at the end of FY21.

Laura Davis was hired as the new Director of Teaching and Learning and remained in that role for two years. Kate Saccento, Director of Administration also resigned at the end of FY24. With the loss of the two Directors, the Board of Trustees has requested an amendment to change our leadership structure so that the Director of Administration role is a newly defined Head of School, with the Director of Teaching and Learning reporting to this new role. Following this change, the Head of School will be the sole school leader to report to the Board of Trustees. This change will reduce the number of leaders reporting to the Board of Trustees and ensure that the Director of Teaching and Learning is both a manageable role and has the close supervision and support of a Head of School who sees their critical daily work with students and staff. With the recent high turnover rate of this role, our community recognizes that it is imperative that some of its responsibilities be shifted to others (for example, we added a Behavior Support Coordinator role) and that more support is provided through an on-site supervisor. Surveys and dialogue with our full community of stakeholders yielded overwhelming support for this change. The requested change can be seen in these [organizational charts](#).

As demonstrated in our Accountability Plan, Hilltown continues to operate on a consensus based decision making model. This model is carried through all committees and teams throughout the school to support a culture of accountability, trust, and collaboration with school stakeholders.

#### Key Indicator 8.2: Professional Climate and Standards for Performance

Hilltown is committed to ensuring a sustainable, collaborative, and professionally engaging climate for all personnel. Evidence includes our meeting structures, professional development activities, compensated time for report writing and family conferences, the educator evaluation system, and organizational participation opportunities.

There are several meeting structures in place that enable collaboration among staff members, and between staff members and district leadership. This includes weekly or biweekly grade-level Student Support Team (SST) meetings, regular grade-level curriculum integration meetings, biweekly Teacher Meetings, four periods per week of common planning time for grade-level academic teachers in grades K-5, and one or two periods per week for grades 6-8. Teams of teachers, service providers, and administrators meet regularly including the Mental Health Team, and Special Education and Related Services (SERS) team. All meetings have open agendas that any staff member may add to. Teacher Meetings rotate facilitator, time keeper, and note-taker roles, and these meeting notes are shared with teaching assistants. The Board of Trustees (BoT) includes administrative staff positions as non-voting members, and three staff representative positions. Domain Council is a subcommittee of the BoT, and meets at least once per month. It includes lead administrators for the three domains (education, administration, community) and BoT leaders. This is an open meeting that anyone can attend, and has been intentionally scheduled at times that work for most teachers' schedules. Hilltown supports a Staff Council, which provides

opportunities for staff members to meet without administrators present, and then to request “Bridge Meetings” to share information and discuss concerns. Administrators are also able to request Bridge Meetings with the Staff Council for two-way communication.

Hilltown designs professional development to address specific needs that surface through academic, behavior, and community data, as well as themes that arise qualitatively across the range of collaborative meetings outlined above. In the prior charter renewal cycle, whole-staff professional development has focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), trauma-informed practices, strategies to support student behavior, autism, and JEDI topics such as anti-bias teaching and cultural humility. Grade-level teams of teachers and individuals have also engaged in workshops related to teaching reading, writing, and mathematics. Special education teachers have prepared themselves to transition to the new IEP system. Hilltown’s calendar of whole-staff professional development days is also used to provide compensated time for individualized family conferences in the fall, and narrative progress report writing in the spring. Every professional development day includes time for teams of teachers to engage in self-directed professional collaboration in support of students. Every new teacher (i.e., those in their first two years) has an assigned mentor with whom they meet at least weekly. Teachers who have been at Hilltown for a longer period of time, and are working on solving a particular problem of practice (e.g., a significant percentage of their class requires individualized behavior supports) may also have an assigned mentor who has demonstrated expertise in this area. This balance of whole-school training and individual autonomy in Hilltown’s approach to professional development allows a wide range of educators to meet their professional needs.

Hilltown has well-defined evaluation systems for teachers and teaching assistants, and is in the process of adjusting the evaluation system for school leaders. The teacher evaluation system is based on defined proficiency standards that are aligned with the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. Every year, teachers establish at least one goal that is related to the Teacher Proficiency Standards, and include expected outcomes for the teacher and for students, procedures for achieving the objective, and criteria for measuring success. The director of teaching and learning observes every general education teacher over the course of the year—in formal and informal contexts—and provides feedback. Each spring, parents are provided the opportunity to give feedback on all of their child(ren)’s teachers, and this is shared with teachers (anonymously if requested). Teachers may submit an end-of-year self-reflection. The director of teaching and learning prepares an end-of-year evaluation report. With the recent rise in student mental health and behavior challenges, Hilltown experienced capacity issues related to the director of teaching and learning position that resulted in the full teacher supervision and evaluation system not being implemented as designed. After an inclusive process among administrators, BoT leaders, and teachers, Hilltown increased administrative capacity by adding a full-time student behavior support coordinator position in April 2024, which is intended to allow the director of teaching and learning to focus on supervising and supporting teachers. Hilltown is in the process of adjusting the evaluation system for school leaders and administrative staff.

### **Key Indicator 8.3: Contractual Relationships**

HCCPS does not have a contractual relationship with an education management organization or host district.

## **CRITERION 9: GOVERNANCE**

For nearly the last fifteen years, the Board has consistently held finely moderated, documented and focused two hour monthly meetings. Board roles are clear and well documented. Committee chairs are responsible for running meetings and ensuring minute taking. The Board is intentional regarding change in leadership, ensuring that the presidency rotates to the vice-president after 2-3 years. Consistency is maintained in this way. The Clerk ensures compliance with open meeting law and other regulatory matters.

Board packets containing agendas, minutes, committee reports, and proposals over the past five years provide documentation of high functioning oversight of the school.

## **CRITERION 10: FINANCE**

Over the last five years there have been a lot of changes in public education expenditures and funding due to the COVID 19 pandemic. There was also the introduction of SOA funds incorporated into tuition. We experienced two years of major surplus which allowed us to supply our staff with bonuses, which felt very important to do after such challenging years during and following the pandemic. With ESSER funding, Hilltown provided summer programming that targeted learning loss. We also added a dedicated social emotional special education teacher. The loss of ESSER funding was expected, but the need for the services it was funding have not abated. Fortunately, we have ended FY24 with a surplus that will offset any deficit in FY25. Overall, the past five years, we have seen the budget remain sound with only one year of small deficit, due in part due to sending districts cutting non-grant funded costs which directly affected AFR tuition.

HCCPS continues to follow sound accounting practices and continually looks for ways to cut costs and keep the budget balanced. We are monitoring expenditures on a regular basis to identify trends and find proactive solutions to any overspending. Our Board of Trustees reviews financial statements every quarter at a public meeting. Evidence can be found in annual financial reports of our stable financial condition; these reports are publicly available on our website. We have changed auditors twice in the past five years to make sure that we are not growing complacent in our practices, and always have new eyes looking to keep us accountable to the public. We have \$500,000 set aside in reserve accounts to fund capital expenditures and unexpected costs. We keep these reserves in interest bearing certificates of deposit to maximize our money's potential. Our policies dictate keeping these reserves at certain minimum levels to ensure sustainability. HCCPS will continue to diligently work towards balancing its annual budget and securing its financial future.

## PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Hilltown's current Long Range Plan went into effect in September of 2023. The plan was developed between the fall of 2021 and the spring of 2023. We identified three overarching areas to focus on over the next five years.

- The first is cultivating a vibrant community. This work will include implementing school-wide SEL goals, hiring appropriate personnel to meet increased social emotional needs, and maintaining consistency and predictability in our school schedules. Many beloved in-person events were paused or scaled back during the pandemic, and bringing back these events, and making them more accessible to all families is integral to the next five years. We will also be developing systems to increase transparency around decision making, at both the school and board level, through clear communication.
- The second focus area is to weave justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into the fabric of HCCPS. We will follow recommendations from the school's Equity Audit, and data gathered from the school climate survey to guide our work. We will embed our vision of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into our Community Agreements, curriculum review cycle, and board member training. We will continue efforts to increase access to our school via robust recruitment efforts, with specific strategies for reaching historically underserved populations.
- The third focus area is to align schoolwide systems and structures to a shared vision of excellence. Developing sustainable systems to support excellent arts integration is a priority, including clear coordination of an arts integration calendar. Looking at our current grade alignment will also be examined in the next five years, with the goal of an alignment that best matches the developmental needs of our students.

## APPENDIX A: ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN PERFORMANCE

Please submit this section in Microsoft Word format, not in PDF format.

### FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

Objective (for KDE 1): Hilltown students and their families will participate in the life of the school through classrooms, community events, and school governance.	Charter Term Performance M (Met); NM (Not Met)	Evidence
<p>Measure: 90% of families who respond to the annual satisfaction survey will report that there exists a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families. At least 40% of families will complete the survey. 80% of the families measured will match school demographics.</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: NM 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Given that our operating model evolved several times over the school year, we decided not to ask for a summative satisfaction survey. Instead, parents participated in 5 surveys about satisfaction with various models for operating during COVID. In each survey, at least 40% of families participated. The surveys were anonymous and, therefore, we cannot evaluate survey participation in comparison with school demographics.</p> <p>2021-22: We plan to re-issue this year's annual satisfaction survey because, due to technical difficulties, the first round did not yield useful results.</p> <p>2022-23: There were 68 responses to our annual satisfaction survey. (We had a total of 137 families in 2022-2023.) At least 80% of these responses matched school demographics. Seventy-five percent of families said that they feel a connection or a strong connection to the school.</p> <p>2023-24: There were 111 responses to our annual satisfaction survey. (We had a total of 163 families in 2023-2024.) This response surpasses our goal of at least 40% of families completing the survey. Survey responses showed that at least 80% of these responses matched school demographics. Ninety-six percent of families reported students feeling connected to the school.</p>

<p>Measure: 100% of students in grades K-8 will participate in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community. Such programs include weekly All School gatherings, year-long cross-grade buddies, monthly mixed-age lunchroom assignments, and mixed-age mini-courses at least three times per year.</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: This school year, All School (a mixed-age program) was held virtually via Zoom on Wednesday mornings so that all students (remote and in-person) could attend. The online school calendar shows evidence of these All School meetings. Due to COVID restrictions related to mixing cohorts, students were not able to participate in year-long cross-grade buddies, monthly mixed-age lunchroom assignments, or in-person mixed-age mini-courses at least three times a year. September through March, Hilltown offered weekly virtual mini-courses that were mixed age. A Google site documents the range of offerings.</p> <p>2021-22: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community, including weekly All School meetings, year-long cross-grade buddies, and mixed-age mini-courses. However, mixed-age mini-courses happened two times (not three times) and mixed-age lunchroom assignments did not happen. We were not able to meet this goal due to COVID-related restrictions.</p> <p>2022-23: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community, including weekly All School meetings, year-long cross-grade buddies, and three sessions of mixed-age mini-courses.</p> <p>2023-24: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in mixed-age programs to build a sense of student community, including weekly All School meetings, year-long cross-grade buddies, and three sessions of mixed-age mini-courses.</p>
<p>Measure: 90% of families, with proportionate representation of the school demographics, will engage in one or more whole-school community events or programs: Winter Fair, Solstice Celebration, Music Festival, Grandparents and Special Elders Day, “Link Families” for incoming families.</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: During this school year, we modified our whole-school community events to follow health and safety guidelines. We held our Winter Solstice online and had a smaller Winter Fair outside. The modified events yielded a smaller percentage of attendance of families. Also due to pandemic restrictions, we were not able to have our Music Festival or Grandparents and Special Elders Day. However, these cancellations and limitations made way for a new Dance event that was held outside for families, led by guest artist Kabisko Kaba.</p> <p>2021-22: This year, we held many of our traditional whole-school community events, including Solstice Celebration and “Link Families” for incoming families. Some community events such as Winter Fair, Music Festival, and Grandparents and Special Elders’ Day were not possible due to COVID related restrictions.</p>



		<p>Approximately 70% of families were able to engage in the events that took place, with proportionate representation of the school demographics.</p> <p>2022-23: This year, we were excited to bring back almost all of our whole-school community events including Solstice Celebration, Winter Fair, Music Festival, and weekly All School gatherings. Since the pandemic, we have not yet held Grandparents and Special Elders' Day. We will be reviewing this community event through our recently approved Long Range Plan to determine if this event will continue as it has been held, or if it will be modified. Approximately 90% of families were able to engage in the events that took place, with proportionate representation of the school demographics.</p> <p>2023-24: This year, we were proud to continue with our whole-school community events including Solstice Celebration, Winter Fair, Music Festival, and weekly All School gatherings. At least 90% of families were able to engage in the events that took place, with proportionate representation of the school demographics. Evidence for this measure was collected by event attendance records and the 2024 Family Satisfaction Survey.</p>
<p><b>Objective: (for KDE 2): Hilltown students will access learning by participating in interdisciplinary projects that integrate the arts and incorporate hands-on learning.</b></p>		
	<p><b>Charter Term Performance</b> M (Met); NM (Not Met)</p> <p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <p>2020-21: Hilltown's Integration Archive is available on our website and includes integration planning documents, reflections on learning, and project artifacts.</p> <p>2021-22: Hilltown's Integration Archive is available on our website and includes integration planning documents, reflections on learning, and project artifacts.</p> <p>2022-23: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in hands-on units of study that were created during regular grade-level Integration Meetings that included academic, music, and visual arts teachers (plus the tech teacher in grades 6-8).</p>
<p>Measure: Annually, 95% of students will engage in hands-on units of study that have been co-created by multiple teachers integrating three or more disciplines. The integrated units of study are guided by essential questions arrived at through a</p>		

<p>collaborative process drawing on state standards.</p>		<p>Presentations and artifacts from arts-integrated units and featured studies are shared on Hilltown’s website.</p> <p>2023-24: 100% of students in grades K-8 participated in hands-on units of study created during grade-level Integration Meetings that included academic, music, and visual arts teachers (plus the technology teacher in grades 6-8). Presentations and artifacts from arts-integrated units and featured studies are shared on Hilltown’s website: <a href="https://www.hilltowncharter.org/arts-integrated-projects/">https://www.hilltowncharter.org/arts-integrated-projects/</a></p>
<p>Measure: Annually, 95% of K-8 students will share their artwork with the whole school (via All School gathering presentations, gallery displays, or musical/theater productions). These sharings will be accompanied by integration statements (written or spoken by students or teachers) explaining how their art interacts with other ideas and disciplines in the featured projects.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Slideshows from the Atelier were shown in All School (our weekly whole-school assembly). Teachers and students shared statements explaining the projects.</p> <p>2021-22: Slideshows from the Atelier were shown in All School (our weekly whole-school assembly). Teachers and students shared statements explaining the projects. Rotating exhibits of student work were displayed in the hallways throughout the year, accompanied by detailed write-ups about each display. Some of these projects are on the school website as well.</p> <p>2022-23: 100% of students shared their artwork with the whole school. Slideshows were shown in All School (our weekly whole-school gathering) where teachers and students also shared statements explaining the projects. Rotating exhibits of student work were displayed in the hallways throughout the year, accompanied by detailed write-ups about each display. Some of these projects are on the school website as well.</p> <p>2023-24: 100% of students shared their artwork with the whole school. Slideshows were shown in All School (our weekly whole-school gathering) where teachers and students also shared statements explaining the projects. Rotating exhibits of student work were displayed in the hallways throughout the year, accompanied by detailed write-ups about each display. Students in all grades performed for the school community at the annual Music Festival in May.</p>
<p><b>Objective (for KDE 3): Hilltown students will demonstrate deep learning that requires critical thinking and personal expression.</b></p>		

	Charter Term Performance M (Met); NM (Not Met)	Evidence
<p>Measure: Each 8<sup>th</sup> grader will design, develop, and present an independent interdisciplinary culminating project in an area of personal interest. This will demonstrate research, writing, and presentation skills learned from the HCCPS experience.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Student rubric marks. Papers written and photographs of student work 2021-22: Student rubric marks; Papers written and photographs of student work 2022-23: Each 8th grader designed, developed, and presented an independent research project in an area of personal interest. All projects demonstrated research, writing, and presentation skills. 2023-24: Each 8th grader designed, developed, and presented an independent research project in an area of personal interest. All projects demonstrated research, writing, and presentation skills.</p>
<p>Measure: 100% of students in grades K-8 will participate in mixed age mini-courses. K-6 will participate three times a year; grades 7 &amp; 8 will participate two times a year. Students will have the opportunity to express their top choices for course enrollment through surveys.</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Course descriptions, class rosters. Due to the pandemic, our mini courses were offered remotely September-March and attendance was not 100%. We offered mini courses more often than usual to support remote students who needed community time. 2021-22: Grades K-6: Not Met; Grades 7-8: Met. Course descriptions, class rosters. Due to the pandemic, our mini-courses were offered twice this year instead of three times due to concerns about mixing students during the height of the original Omicron wave in January. A wide range of courses were offered in both fall and spring, with 100% participation by all grade levels. 2022-23: 100% of K-6 students participated in 3-4-week mini courses three times during the year, and 100% of 7-8 students participated two times. Mini course enrollment was based on expressed student choices. 2023-24: 100% of K-8 students participated in 3-4-week mini courses three times during the year. Mini course enrollment was based on student requests.</p>
<p><b>Objective (for KDE 4): Hilltown students will demonstrate proficiency on external and internal academic measures.</b></p>		

	Charter Term Performance M (Met); NM (Not Met)	Evidence
<p>Measure: Each grade, 3-8, will score in the top quartile annually in the tested areas of reading and math and core total on the SAT10 test of basic skills. The students in the top quartile will reflect all demographics of the student population in grades 3-8.</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: NM 2023-24: NM</p>	<p>2020-21: SAT10 tests: due to the pandemic and issues with access to appropriate technology, the 3rd grade was unable to test remotely. By grade, groups were not consistently in the top quartile.</p> <p>2021-22: We did not reach our goal for SAT10 scores. Factors that may have affected these scores include: Pandemic related challenges; students' unfamiliarity with the format and content of this new assessment tool (we just switched from IOWAs to SAT10 in 2020-21); technical difficulties in administering this new test</p> <p>2022-23: Hilltown switched to Fastbridge "aReading" and "aMath" screening assessments in 2022. Based on reports available through the Fastbridge system, we define "top quartile" for the purpose of this annual report as 75 percent or more students scoring at or above the national 50th percentile on the Spring 2023 assessment (or most recent). Met measure for Reading in all grades, and did not meet measure for Math in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7.</p> <p>2023-24: Hilltown switched to Fastbridge "aReading" and "aMath" screening assessments in 2022. Based on available reports, we define "top quartile" for the purpose of this annual report as 75 percent or more students scoring at or above the national 50th percentile on the Spring 2024 assessment (or most recent). Met measure for Reading in grades 3 and 8, and did not meet measure for Math in any grade.</p>
<p>Measure: 80% of all students in grades K-3 will annually gain one grade level in reading and writing skills as measured by both nationally recognized and internal benchmark assessments. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: NM 2023-24: NM</p>	<p>2020-21: Reading and Writing assessments</p> <p>2021-22: Reading and Writing assessments</p> <p>2022-23: Grade 3 Fastbridge aReading national growth percentile &gt; 24 (Met); DIBELS: End-of-year national percentile &gt; 24 (Met, 1-3; Not Met, K); Internal writing assessment (Met K, 1; Not Met 2, 3)</p>

demographics of our K-3 student body.		2023-24: Grade 3 Fastbridge aReading national growth percentile >24 (76%); Met or exceeded grade-level end-of-year DIBELS core composite benchmark (77%); Met or exceed grade-level proficiency target on internal writing assessments (82%)
Measure: Annually, 80% of all students in grades 4-8 will demonstrate proficiency in writing on the HCCPS upper grades writing assessment. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the demographics of our 4-8 student body.	2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M	2020-21: Internally developed writing assessments aligned with grade level standards 2021-22: Internally developed writing assessments aligned with grade level standards 2022-23: All grades 4-8 demonstrated proficiency above 80% on internally developed writing assessments aligned with grade level standards 2023-24: Met grade-level proficiency target on internal writing assessments (93%)
Measure: Annually, 80% of all students in grades K-8 will demonstrate proficiency on end-of-unit math assessments. The 80% of students demonstrating proficiency will reflect the demographics of our K-8 student body.	2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M	2020-21: End of unit math tests 2021-22: End of unit math tests 2022-23: All grades K-8 had a percent of students' average scores on end-of-unit math tests > 69% 2023-24: Average scores on end-of-unit math assessments 70% or higher (93%)
Measure: 100% of 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade students will achieve a passing score on the Grade 8 culminating project rubric.	2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M	2020-21: 100% of students achieved a passing score on culminating project rubrics. 2021-22: 100% of students achieved a passing score on culminating project rubrics. 2022-23: 100% of students achieved a passing score on culminating project rubrics. 2023-24: 100% of 8th grade students achieved a passing score on culminating project
<b>Objective: Members of the Board of Trustees and the school Directors will demonstrate responsive leadership with respect to the broader community of stakeholders (staff, students, families, and local community).</b>		

	Charter Term Performance M (Met); NM (Not Met)	Evidence
<p>Measure: Board of Trustees decisions will be made using a consensus model of decision making at least 90% of the time as indicated in Board minutes. Majority votes will only be taken if consensus cannot be reached in a timely manner.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Board minutes indicate the decision-making mechanism used for each Board decision.</p> <p>2021-22: Board minutes indicate the decision-making mechanism used for each Board decision. Approved Board minutes are posted on the school's website.</p> <p>2022-23: Board minutes document the decision-making mechanism used for each Board decision. Approved Board minutes are posted on the school's website.</p> <p>2023-24: All new Board members are trained on the consensus model of decision. Board minutes document the decision-making mechanism used for each Board decision. The 2023-2024 approved Board minutes are posted on the school's website.</p>
<p>Measure: The Directors will work cooperatively to manage and guide the school. They will collaborate with the Board of Trustees through a Domain Council that meets bi-weekly throughout the school year. The Domain consists of the President and Vice President of the Board, as well as the Directors of the school.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: NM 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Domain Council schedule of meetings and minutes illustrates the shared project of operating the school during a pandemic and how the directors cooperated around responsibilities.</p> <p>2021-22: Domain Council schedule of meetings and minutes illustrates how the directors worked cooperatively to share the responsibilities of operating the school. The Domain Council met monthly this school year, rather than bi-weekly, to accommodate staff and Teacher schedules during the pandemic. The measure of bi-monthly meetings will be reviewed at the August 2022 Domain Council meeting.</p> <p>2022-23: Domain Council schedule of meetings and minutes illustrates how the Directors worked cooperatively to share the responsibilities of operating the school. The Domain Council met regularly this school year.</p> <p>2023-24: Domain Council schedule of meetings and minutes illustrates how the Directors worked cooperatively to share the responsibilities of operating the school.</p>

		The Domain Council met regularly this school year. The 2023-2024 Domain Council minutes are included in Board packets that are available on the school website.
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**DISSEMINATION**

<b>Objective: Hilltown will share best practices with the local educational communities.</b>		
	<b>Charter Term Performance M (Met); NM (Not Met)</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
<p>Measure: The school will host an Open House each year, during which teachers will highlight key design elements in practice.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Due to COVID restrictions around in-person gatherings, Hilltown hosted an online informational session/open house that was widely advertised through newspapers and postcards distributed to local organizations and businesses. At the Open House, teachers and school directors highlighted key design elements in practice.</p> <p>2021-22: On January 8, 2022, our Administrators and Teachers hosted an Open House. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Open House was held via Zoom. There were breakout rooms for each grade level that offered an opportunity for question and answer. The Academic Support Coordinator was available to answer questions as well. There was a Spanish language translator available.</p> <p>2022-23: This school year, we hosted both an in-person information session (open house) and an online (Zoom) information session before our admissions lottery. Hilltown staff, including Directors, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator and Teachers highlighted key design elements in practice.</p> <p>2023-24: This school year, we hosted both an in-person information session (open house) and an online (Zoom) information session before our admissions</p>

<p>lottery. Hilltown staff, including Directors, Community and Family Engagement Coordinator and Teachers highlighted key design elements in practice.</p>	<p>2020-21: We partnered with Springfield College, Mount Holyoke College, and Smith College School of Social Work, hosting 5 interns altogether.</p> <p>2021-22: In the 2021-2022 school year, we partnered with both Elms College and Westfield State University. We hosted early childhood and special education student teachers. We implemented the training protocol developed for our intern program which outlines best practices for both teachers and interns. Our interns and student teachers planned and implemented lessons using our integrated learning model and shared their experience in their college coursework.</p> <p>2022-23: Hilltown partnered with Smith College to reexamine a teacher intern program that had been collaboratively developed and implemented pre-pandemic. The model continued to represent promising practices (see details on next page).</p> <p>Implementing the model in 2022-2023 was not possible due to a significant reduction in graduate-level students at Smith, which essentially eliminated the pipeline of interns. In addition, Hilltown's current Teaching Assistant population has remained relatively consistent over the past few years, which reduced our ability to guarantee paid intern positions. We plan to keep the program in place, and to implement it where possible in collaboration with Smith College and other area teacher preparation programs.</p> <p>2023-24: Hilltown partnered with Smith College to reexamine a teacher intern program that had been collaboratively developed and implemented pre-pandemic. The model continued to represent promising practices. Implementing the model in 2023-2024 was not possible due to an ongoing and significant reduction in graduate-level students at Smith, which essentially eliminated the pipeline of interns. In addition, Hilltown's current Teaching Assistant population has remained relatively consistent over the past few years, which reduced our ability to guarantee paid intern positions. We plan to keep the program in place, and to implement it where possible in collaboration with Smith College and other area teacher preparation programs.</p>
<p>Measure: The school will partner with an area college or university to develop a model program for training teachers.</p>	<p>2020-21: M</p> <p>2021-22: M</p> <p>2022-23: M</p> <p>2023-24: M</p>



<p>Measure: The school will use its website to disseminate information on integration projects. One project per grade level band per year.</p>	<p>2020-21: M 2021-22: M 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Our website includes slideshows of SY20-21 arts integrated projects from all classrooms.</p> <p>2021-22: Each grade level band has an integrated project represented on our website. For example, one grade level band worked in small groups to learn about different types of extreme weather. They used their knowledge of extreme weather to create a "local weather report:" that they scripted, performed and recorded.</p> <p>2022-23: Each grade level band has an integrated project from 2022-2023 represented on the Hilltown website.</p> <p>2023-24: Each grade level band has an integrated project from 2023-2024 represented on the Hilltown website.</p>
<p>Measure: Annual evening workshop featuring key design element (e.g., building community in a K-8 school or arts-integrated curriculum projects).</p>	<p>2020-21: NM 2021-22: NM 2022-23: M 2023-24: M</p>	<p>2020-21: Due to the pandemic and the unusually large number of Board meetings and evening meetings/listening sessions held for the staff and parent community, we were unable to schedule an evening workshop on a key design element this year.</p> <p>2021-22: COVID limited our ability to hold large, in person gatherings. When restrictions eased in the spring, we were able to hold our annual meeting in person, and incorporated student performances, both vocal and instrumental.</p> <p>2022-23: Hilltown held its annual Meeting of the Cooperative in person on May 24, 2023. The evening program was centered around whole-community participation in school governance and JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) discussions. The event also featured a range of vocal and instrumental student performances, an extensive gallery display of student artwork (most of it connected to integrated curriculum projects), and a presentation about the school's new kiln and ceramics program.</p> <p>2023-24: Hilltown held its annual Meeting of the Cooperative in person on May 22, 2024. The evening program was centered around whole-community participation in discussions of arts/academics integration and supporting a strong arts program. The event also featured a range of student vocal performances, and a gallery display of student artwork.</p>



## APPENDIX B: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATION STATEMENTS

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

This form must be signed by the chair of the board of trustees or by a signatory designated by the board of trustees through a vote taken at a meeting held in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. The Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter (Application) will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted if it does not include the Statement of Assurances.

**Name of School: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

**Address: 1 Industrial Parkway, Easthampton, MA 01027**

As the authorized representative of the charter school, I hereby certify under the penalties of perjury that the information submitted in this Application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; and further, I certify that the school:

1. Will not charge tuition, fees, or other mandatory payments for attendance at the charter school, for participation in required or elective courses, or for mandated services or programs (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(m), and 603 CMR 1.03(3)).
2. Will not charge any public school for the use or replication of any part of their curriculum subject to the prescriptions of any contract between the charter school and any third-party provider (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(l)).
3. Will permit parents to enroll their children only voluntarily and not because they must send their children to this school (The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title V, Part B, Subpart 1 — Public Charter Schools Section 5210(1)(h)).
4. Will enroll any eligible student who submits a timely and complete application, unless the school receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students. If the number of applications exceeds the spaces available, the school will hold a lottery in accordance with Massachusetts charter laws and regulations (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(n), and 603 CMR 1.05).
5. Will be open to all students, on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or academic achievement (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(m)).
6. Will operate in a school facility that is fully or programmatically accessible to individuals with physical handicaps.
7. Will be secular in its curriculum, programs, admissions, policies, governance, employment practices, and operation in accordance with the federal and state constitutions and any other relevant provisions of federal and state law.
8. Will comply with the federal Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.
9. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and chapter 71B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

10. Will adhere to all applicable provisions of federal and state law relating to students who are English learners including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, and chapter 71A of the Massachusetts General Laws.
11. Will comply with all other applicable federal and state laws including, but not limited to, the requirement to offer a school nutrition program (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 69, § 1 (c)).
12. Will meet the performance standards and assessment requirements set by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for all students in public schools including, but not limited to, administering the state assessment test (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(v), and 603 CMR 1.04(3)(k)).
13. Will submit an annual report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on or before the required deadline (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(jj)).
14. Will submit an Accountability Plan following the school's renewal, establishing specific five-year performance objectives as specified in the state regulations (603 CMR 1.04 (3)(l)) and guidelines.
15. Will submit an annual independent audit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Office of the State Auditor no later than November 1st of every year, as required by the charter school statute (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(jj)), or at such other time as designated in 603 CMR 1.08 (3)).
16. Will submit required enrollment data each March to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by the required deadline (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(o), and 603 CMR 1.08(5)).
17. Will submit required waitlist report data, including sibling enrollment, as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by the required deadlines (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(n), and 603 CMR 1.08(6)).
18. When constructing or renovating a facility, will operate in compliance with state requirements regarding designer selection, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 7C, §§ 44-58; public bidding, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 149; public works construction, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 30, § 39M; and prevailing wage, Mass. Gen. Laws c. 149, §§ 26-27.
19. Will operate in compliance with generally accepted government accounting principles (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(jj)).
20. Will maintain financial records to meet the requirements of Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89 and 603 CMR 1.00.
21. Will participate in the Massachusetts State Teachers' Retirement System (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(y)).
22. Will employ individuals who either hold an appropriate license to teach in a public school in Massachusetts or who will take and pass the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) within their first year of employment and meet all applicable staff requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71 § 89(ii), and 603 CMR 1.06(4)).
23. Will ensure that a criminal background check has been performed, prior to their employment, on all employees of the school who will have unsupervised contact with children (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 38R, and 603 CMR 1.04(7)(d)).
24. Will obtain and keep current all necessary permits, licenses, and certifications related to fire, health, and safety within the building(s) and on school property (603 CMR 1.04(7)(e), 1.04(7)(f), 1.05(7)(g), and 1.05(7)(h)).

25. Will maintain uninterrupted necessary and appropriate insurance coverage (603 CMR 1.04(7)(h)).
26. Will submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education the names, home addresses, and employment and educational histories of proposed new members of the school's board of trustees for approval prior to their service (603 CMR 1.06(1)(b)).
27. Will ensure that every member of the school's board of trustees shall meet all training as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and any other requirements by other state agencies, including the requirements under the Commonwealth's open meeting law and conflict of interest law (603 CMR 1.06).
28. Will ensure that all members of the school's board of trustees file with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the State Ethics Commission, and the city or town clerk where the charter school is located completed financial disclosure forms for the preceding calendar year according to the schedule required by the Office of Charter Schools and School Redesign (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(u)). The disclosure is in addition to the requirements of said chapter 268A and a member of a board of trustees must also comply with the disclosure and other requirements of said chapter 268A.
29. Will recognize, if applicable, an employee organization designated by the authorization cards of 50 percent of its employees in the appropriate bargaining unit as the exclusive representative of all the employees in such unit for the purpose of collective bargaining (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(y)).
30. Will provide the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with a federal taxpayer identification number issued solely to the charter school and all required information regarding a bank account held solely in the name of the charter school (603 CMR 1.04(8)).
31. Will, in the event the board of trustees intends to procure substantially all educational services for the charter school through a contract with another person or entity, submit such contract for approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide for any necessary revisions and approval prior to the beginning of the contract period (Mass. Gen. Laws c. 71, § 89(k)(5)).
32. Will notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education immediately in writing of any change in circumstances that may have a significant impact on the school's ability to fulfill its goals or missions as stated in its charter (603 CMR 1.08(11)).
33. Will submit in writing to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education a request to amend its charter if the school plans to make a change to its operations as defined in 603 CMR 1.10.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Chair of Board of Trustees (or Designated Signatory)

07/24/2024

Date

**Print/Type Name: Kathleen Hulton**

**Title: Chair, Board of Trustees**

# RENEWAL APPLICATION CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

**Name of School: Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**

**Address: 1 Industrial Parkway, Easthampton, MA 01027**

I hereby certify that the information submitted in this Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter is true to the best of my knowledge and belief; that this application has been approved by the school's board of trustees; and that, if awarded a renewed charter, the school shall continue to be open to all students on a space available basis, and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in the English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement. This is a true statement, made under the penalties of perjury.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: Chair of Board of Trustees (or Designated Signatory)

07/24/2024  
Date

**Print/Type Name: Kathleen Hulton**

**Title: Chair, Board of Trustees**

**Date the Application for Renewal Was Approved by the School's Board of Trustees: 07/24/2024**

## APPENDIX C: DOCUMENTS

Address	Function
1 Industrial Parkway, Easthampton, MA 01027	Primary/only school facility

*Appendix C* must contain copies of all of the documents below. Links to documents are not acceptable. **If the school operates in multiple buildings, documentation must be provided for each one**, as applicable. Because documents are not always clearly labeled, **please include a separate cover sheet for each document** that identifies it as one of the following:

- Up-to-date Certificate of Occupancy/Occupancy Permit/Certificate of Use and Occupancy
- Up-to-date Fire Inspection Certificate/Fire Department Field Inspection Report
- Up-to-date Building Safety Inspection/Certificate of Inspection
- Up-to-date Flammable Compounds and Liquids Certificate (N/A)
- Up-to-date Health Inspection/Health Permit (N/A)
- Up-to-date Insurance Certificate(s), such as liability insurance and directors' and officers' insurance
- Most recent Asbestos Inspection (within the past three years) and AHERA Management Plan (N/A) (or, if not applicable, a certification statement by the architect, building engineer, or a licensed inspector that there are no asbestos-containing materials in the building)
- Lead Inspection Certification (if serving students under the age of six) and de-leading Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) certifications N/A
- Completed Lead and Copper in Schools Maintenance Checklist (Please note: Mass DEP recommends sampling and testing at least every three years. Here are some MassDEP pages with further information: Lead & Copper Forms and Templates, Lead in Drinking Water; Sampling for Lead and Copper at Schools and Childcare Facilities; MassDEP online presentation for setting up a school sampling program)
- Up-to-date Multi-Hazard Evacuation Plan
- Up-to date Medical Emergency Response Plan

**Please ensure that all documents are up to date prior to submitting the Application for Renewal.** If any of these documents is **not** up to date when you submit your Application for Renewal, provide a summary of actions taken by the school to remedy this issue and evidence (typically copies of email correspondence) showing that you have scheduled the necessary inspections for the fall of 2024. Once the necessary inspections have been completed and documents have been updated, you are expected to provide the updated documents to the Department.

## APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES TURNOVER

Using the table below, list the number of board members joining and leaving the board in each school year of the current charter period.

School Year	Total Membership	Members Joining	Members Departing
2020-21	12	3	2
2021-22	13	4	5
2022-23	12	2	4
2023-24	15	5	5

### ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE DATA

TABLE A: Next Generation MCAS Tests 2023, Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level

Grade	Subject	%M+E	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	# Stud.	% Partic.	Avg SS	Avg SGP	# in SGP
3	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	71	10	62	24	5	21	100	503	N/A	N/A
3	MATHEMATICS	38	5	33	52	10	21	100	493	N/A	N/A
4	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	67	5	62	33	0	21	100	504	N/A	19
4	MATHEMATICS	67	10	57	33	0	21	100	508	N/A	19
5	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	35	0	35	55	10	20	95	497	N/A	19
5	MATHEMATICS	70	5	65	30	0	20	95	507	N/A	19
5	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	55	10	45	45	0	20	95	506	N/A	N/A
6	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	55	0	55	39	6	31	97	499	50	26
6	MATHEMATICS	39	0	39	55	6	31	97	494	39	26
7	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	47	3	43	43	10	30	94	495	40	29
7	MATHEMATICS	50	3	47	40	10	30	94	497	61	29
8	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	63	20	43	30	7	30	100	509	54	28
8	MATHEMATICS	67	3	63	27	7	30	100	502	54	29
8	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	73	13	60	20	7	30	100	509	N/A	N/A
3-8	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	56	7	50	37	7	153	97	501	47	121
3-8	MATHEMATICS	54	4	50	40	6	153	97	500	53	122



5 & 8	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	66	12	54	30	4	50	98	508	N/A	N/A
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**TABLE B: Next Generation MCAS Tests 2022, Percent of Students at Each Achievement Level**

Grade	Subject	%M+E	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	# Stud.	% Partic.	Avg SS	Avg SGP	# in SGP
3	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	65	5	60	30	5	20	100	506	N/A	N/A
3	MATHEMATICS	50	5	45	40	10	20	100	498	N/A	N/A
4	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	45	0	45	55	0	20	95	497	N/A	19
4	MATHEMATICS	75	10	65	25	0	20	95	508	N/A	18
5	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	36	0	36	59	5	22	100	495	34	20
5	MATHEMATICS	32	0	32	59	9	22	100	491	N/A	19
5	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	62	10	52	33	5	21	95	507	N/A	N/A
6	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	63	6	56	28	9	32	100	502	63	22
6	MATHEMATICS	41	0	41	50	9	32	100	493	40	22
7	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	62	3	59	28	10	29	97	502	42	24
7	MATHEMATICS	50	3	47	43	7	30	100	501	62	25
8	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	50	3	47	47	3	30	100	502	43	25
8	MATHEMATICS	55	3	52	41	3	29	97	504	58	24
8	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	66	21	45	31	3	29	97	511	N/A	N/A
3-8	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	54	3	51	40	6	153	99	501	43	110
3-8	MATHEMATICS	50	3	46	44	7	153	99	499	51	108
5 & 8	SCIENCE/TECH/ENG	64	16	48	32	4	50	96	510	N/A	N/A

**TABLE C: MCAS 2023 Results by Subgroup**

GRADE LEVEL 03 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS										
Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP	
Students w/ Disabilities	4							N/A	N/A	
Low Income	2							N/A	N/A	
High Needs	5							N/A	N/A	
Asian	2							N/A	N/A	
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	2							N/A	N/A	
White	17	100	6	71	18	6	501	N/A	N/A	
Male	9							N/A	N/A	

Female	12	100	8	58	25	8	500	N/A	N/A
Title 1	5							N/A	N/A
Non-Title 1	16	100	13	69	19	0	506	N/A	N/A
Non-Disabled	17	100	12	65	24	0	506	N/A	N/A
Non-Low Income	19	100	11	63	21	5	504	N/A	N/A
All Students	21	100	10	62	24	5	503	N/A	N/A

**GRADE LEVEL 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	2							N/A	2
Low Income	7							N/A	7
High Needs	7							N/A	7
Hispanic/Latino	2							N/A	2
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	3							N/A	2
White	16	100	6	56	38	0	503		15
Male	8							N/A	7
Female	13	100	8	69	23	0	506		12
Title 1	3							N/A	3
Non-Title 1	18	100	6	61	33	0	505		16
Non-Disabled	19	100	5	63	32	0	505		17
Non-Low Income	14	100	7	64	29	0	505		12
Military	1							N/A	1
All Students	21	100	5	62	33	0	504		19

**GRADE LEVEL 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	4								4
Low Income	3								3
High Needs	6								6
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	4								4
White	16	94	0	44	44	13	498		15
Male	12	92	0	42	42	17	496		11
Female	7								7
Title 1	5								5
Non-Title 1	15	100	0	47	47	7	500		14
Non-Disabled	16	100	0	44	50	6	500		15
Non-Low Income	17	94	0	35	59	6	498		16

All Students	20	95	0	35	55	10	497		19
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**GRADE LEVEL 06 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	6								6
Low Income	6								6
High Needs	8								8
Asian	2								2
Hispanic/Latino	2								1
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	4								4
White	23	100	0	61	35	4	502		19
Male	17	94	0	47	41	12	496		16
Female	12	100	0	67	33	0	503		9
Title 1	3								3
Non-Title 1	28	100	0	57	39	4	500	50	23
Non-Disabled	25	100	0	64	36	0	504	50	20
Non-Low Income	25	96	0	56	40	4	501	48	20
Ever EL	1								1
Military	1								1
All Students	31	97	0	55	39	6	499	50	26

**GRADE LEVEL 07 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	8								8
EL and Former EL	1								1
Low Income	7								7
High Needs	13	93	0	23	62	15	485		13
Asian	1								1
Hispanic/Latino	1								1
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	1								
White	27	93	4	44	41	11	495	40	27
Male	19	100	0	47	47	5	494		18
Female	11	92	9	36	36	18	495		11
Title 1	5								5
Non-Title 1	25	93	4	48	40	8	497	40	24
Non-Disabled	22	96	5	55	36	5	501	44	21
Non-Low Income	23	92	4	48	35	13	494	39	22

Former EL	1								1
Ever EL	1								1
All Students	30	94	3	43	43	10	495	40	29

**GRADE LEVEL 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	6								6
Low Income	8								7
High Needs	11	100	0	27	55	18	489		10
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	5								5
White	25	100	16	44	32	8	507	56	23
Male	18	100	22	33	33	11	508		17
Female	11	100	18	55	27	0	511		10
Title 1	2								2
Non-Title 1	28	100	21	46	29	4	511	54	26
Non-Disabled	24	100	25	54	21	0	517	53	22
Non-Low Income	22	100	27	45	18	9	514	57	21
All Students	30	100	20	43	30	7	509	54	28

**GRADE LEVEL 03 - MATHEMATICS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	4							N/A	N/A
Low Income	2							N/A	N/A
High Needs	5							N/A	N/A
Asian	2							N/A	N/A
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	2							N/A	N/A
White	17	100	6	29	53	12	492	N/A	N/A
Male	9							N/A	N/A
Female	12	100	8	25	50	17	491	N/A	N/A
Title 1	5							N/A	N/A
Non-Title 1	16	100	6	31	56	6	493	N/A	N/A
Non-Disabled	17	100	6	41	47	6	496	N/A	N/A
Non-Low Income	19	100	5	37	47	11	495	N/A	N/A
All Students	21	100	5	33	52	10	493	N/A	N/A

**GRADE LEVEL 04 - MATHEMATICS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
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Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	4								4
White	23	100	0	39	57	4	496		19
Male	17	94	0	41	47	12	496		16
Female	12	100	0	33	67	0	492		9
Title 1	3								3
Non-Title 1	28	100	0	43	54	4	496	43	23
Non-Disabled	25	100	0	48	52	0	499	43	20
Non-Low Income	25	96	0	44	56	0	497	44	20
Ever EL	1								1
Military	1								1
All Students	31	97	0	39	55	6	494	39	26

**GRADE LEVEL 07 - MATHEMATICS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	8								8
EL and Former EL	1								1
Low Income	7								7
High Needs	13	93	8	15	54	23	486		13
Asian	1								1
Hispanic/Latino	1								1
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	1								
White	27	93	4	48	37	11	496	60	27
Male	19	100	5	53	37	5	503		18
Female	11	92	0	36	45	18	486		11
Title 1	5								5
Non-Title 1	25	93	4	56	32	8	501	65	24
Non-Disabled	22	96	5	59	36	0	505	69	21
Non-Low Income	23	92	0	52	35	13	495	54	22
Former EL	1								1
Ever EL	1								1
All Students	30	94	3	47	40	10	497	61	29

**GRADE LEVEL 08 - MATHEMATICS**

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	6								6
Low Income	8								8
High Needs	11	100	0	45	36	18	491		11

Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	5								5
White	25	100	4	60	28	8	501	57	24
Male	18	100	6	61	22	11	501		17
Female	11	100	0	64	36	0	502		11
Title 1	2								2
Non-Title 1	28	100	4	64	29	4	503	54	27
Non-Disabled	24	100	4	75	21	0	507	54	23
Non-Low Income	22	100	5	68	18	9	503	50	21
All Students	30	100	3	63	27	7	502	54	29

#### GRADE LEVEL 05 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	4							N/A	N/A
Low Income	3							N/A	N/A
High Needs	6							N/A	N/A
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp/Lat	4							N/A	N/A
White	16	94	13	50	38	0	507	N/A	N/A
Male	12	92	8	50	42	0	507	N/A	N/A
Female	7							N/A	N/A
Title 1	5							N/A	N/A
Non-Title 1	15	100	13	47	40	0	507	N/A	N/A
Non-Disabled	16	100	13	50	38	0	508	N/A	N/A
Non-Low Income	17	94	6	47	47	0	506	N/A	N/A
All Students	20	95	10	45	45	0	506	N/A	N/A

#### GRADE LEVEL 08 - SCIENCE AND TECH/ENG

Student Group	# Stud	% Partic	%E	%M	%PM	%NM	AvgSS	SGP	# in SGP
Students w/ Disabilities	6							N/A	N/A
Low Income	8							N/A	N/A
High Needs	11	100	0	45	36	18	496	N/A	N/A
Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	5							N/A	N/A
White	25	100	12	56	24	8	507	N/A	N/A
Male	18	100	17	61	11	11	510	N/A	N/A
Female	11	100	9	55	36	0	505	N/A	N/A
Title 1	2							N/A	N/A
Non-Title 1	28	100	14	61	21	4	511	N/A	N/A
Non-Disabled	24	100	17	71	13	0	515	N/A	N/A

Non-Low Income	22	100	18	64	14	5	512	N/A	N/A
All Students	30	100	13	60	20	7	509	N/A	N/A

**TABLE D: Grades K-3 Students Showing Evidence of Reading Proficiency on DIBELS, Spring 2024**

READING (Grades K-3)	Total #	Percent met or exceeded grade-level end-of-year DIBELS core composite benchmark
All Students	83	77%
Male	44	77%
Female	36	75%
Non-binary	3	-
Special Education	18	44%
General Education	65	86%
BIPoC	13	54%
White	70	81%

**TABLE E: Students Not Meeting DIBELS End-of-Year Core Competency Benchmark, 2023 and 2024**

		Students Not Meeting DIBELS End-of-Year Core Competency Benchmark	
Grade	# Students	2023	2024
K	20	55%	20%
1	20	5%	25%
2	21	33%	18%
3	21 (22 in SY24)	24%	29%

**TABLE F: Fastbridge aReading and aMath Scores, 2023-2024**

GRADE	# Students	Avg. Reading Score National Percentile	Avg. Reading Growth National Percentile	Avg. Math Score National Percentile	Avg. Math Growth National Percentile
3	21	73	61	63	49
4	22	67	28	62	48
5	22	68	29	62	36
6	34	70	32	69	54
7	28	66	35	61	40
8	28	69	31	57	38



**TABLE G: Students in Grades 3-8 at or above Fastbridge National 50th Percentile in Reading and Math, Spring 2024 (or most recent)**

<b>READING (Grades 3-8)</b>	<b>Total #</b>	<b>Percent at or above National 50th percentile</b>
All Students	155	78%
Male	84	75%
Female	68	81%
Non-binary	3	-
Special Education	41	51%
General Education	114	88%
BIPoC	35	60%
White	120	83%
<b>MATH (Grades 3-8)</b>	<b>Total #</b>	<b>Percent at or above National 50th percentile</b>
All Students	155	68%
Male	84	70%
Female	68	63%
Non-binary	3	-
Special Education	41	34%
General Education	114	80%
BIPoC	35	60%
White	120	70%

## APPENDIX E: APPLICATION CONTENT CHECKLIST

The completed Application should present the required information in the following order:

- Cover page labeled "Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter" that lists the following information:
  - School name
  - School address
  - School contact information: name, title, telephone, and email address
  - Date that the school's board of trustees voted approval of the Application
  - Application submission date
  - Cover letter (optional)
  - Table of contents listing all major sections, appendices, and page numbers
  - Introduction to the school (table)
  - Performance and plans section (should not exceed 25 pages)
  - Faithfulness to the Charter
    - Criterion 1: Mission and Key Design Elements
    - Criterion 2: Access and Equity
    - Criterion 3: Compliance
    - Criterion 4: Dissemination
  - Academic Program Success
    - Criterion 5: Student Performance
    - Criterion 6: Program Delivery
    - Criterion 7: School Climate and Family Engagement
  - Organizational Viability
    - Criterion 8: Capacity
    - Criterion 9: Governance
    - Criterion 10: Finance
  - Plans for the Next Five Years
  - Appendix A: Accountability Plan Performance (in Microsoft Word format)
  - Appendix B: Statement of Assurances and Certification Statements (See *Application Submission Requirements* on page 5 for acceptable ways of submitting electronic signatures.)
    - General Statement of Assurances
    - Renewal Application Certification Statement (required of Commonwealth and Horace Mann charters)
  - Appendix C: Documents (If these are not up to date, provide a summary of actions taken by the school to remedy this issue and evidence that you have scheduled the necessary inspections for the fall of 2024. An example of evidence might be an email from a municipal employee confirming the date when an inspection is scheduled to take place.)

- List of each of the school's buildings
- Up-to-date Certificate of Occupancy/Occupancy Permit/Certificate of Use and Occupancy
- Up-to-date Fire Inspection Certificate/Fire Department Field Inspection Report
- Up-to-date Building Safety Inspection/Certificate of Inspection
- Up-to-date Flammable Compounds and Liquids Certificate (if applicable)
- Up-to-date Health Inspection/Health Permit
- Up-to-date Insurance Certificate(s)
- Asbestos Inspection Report and AHERA Management Plan (if applicable)
- Lead Inspection Certification (if serving students under the age of six) and de-leading Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) certifications (if applicable)
- Completed Lead and Copper in Schools Maintenance Checklist
- Up-to-date Multi-Hazard Evacuation Plan
- Up-to date Medical Emergency Response Plan
- Appendix D: Additional Information
  - Board of Trustees Turnover
  - Academic Performance Data
- Appendix E: Application Content Checklist

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Charter Amendment Request Cover Sheet**

All amendment requests (except board of trustee member approvals\*) must include a completed cover sheet.

**School Information**

<b>School Name and Mailing Address</b>	Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School 1 Industrial Parkway Easthampton, MA 01027
<b>Name of School Leader</b>	Kate Saccento Beginning 8/5/24, Christopher Kusek
<b>School Leader Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:ksaccento@hilltowncharter.org">ksaccento@hilltowncharter.org</a> Beginning 8/5/24, <a href="mailto:ckusek@hilltowncharter.org">ckusek@hilltowncharter.org</a>
<b>Name of Board Chair</b>	Kathleen Hulton
<b>Board Chair Email Address</b>	<a href="mailto:khulton@hilltowncharter.org">khulton@hilltowncharter.org</a>
<b>Contact Telephone Number</b> Indicate if <input type="checkbox"/> School Leader or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Board Chair	413-262-7831

**Description of Amendment Request**

**Amendment to be Approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education**  
(check change(s) that are requested)

- District(s) specified in the school's charter
- Maximum enrollment
- Grades served
- Contractual relationship with an education management organization that is providing or planning to provide substantially all educational services

**Amendment to be Approved by the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education**  
(check change(s) that are requested)

- School name
- Mission
- X Governance or leadership structure**
- Educational programs, curriculum models, or whole-school change designs that are inconsistent with those specified in the school's charter
- X Bylaws**
- Memorandum of Understanding (Horace Mann)
- Schedule (e.g. length of school year, school week, or school day)
- Accountability Plan
- Enrollment policy and application
- Expulsion policy (within code of conduct)
- Location of facilities, if such change involves relocating or expanding to another municipality

\*See [Board Governance Resources](#) for information about board of trustees' membership.



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

July 18, 2024

Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
135 Santilli Highway  
Everett, MA 02149

Dear Commissioner,

On behalf of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School [HCCPS or Hilltown] Board of Trustees, I respectfully request your approval of an amendment to change our charter, shifting the Director of Administration role to a newly defined Head of School, with the Director of Teaching and Learning reporting to this new role. Following this leadership structure change, the Head of School will be the sole school leader reporting to the Board of Trustees. These changes to our charter will be effective upon the approval of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The HCCPS Board of Trustees wishes to make this change to reduce the number of leaders reporting to the Board of Trustees and ensure that the Director of Teaching and Learning is both a manageable role and has the close supervision and support of a Head of School who sees their critical daily work with students and staff. With the recent high turnover rate of this role, our community recognizes that it is imperative that some of its responsibilities be shifted to others (for example, we added a Behavior Support Coordinator role) and that more support is provided through an on-site supervisor. Additionally, surveys and dialogue across stakeholder groups yielded overwhelming support for this change, as we faced the resignation of both Directors in May and sought new leaders in a very short time. The Board of Trustees and wider community recognized the value of having one Head of School role that could attract a wider talent pool, be the primary point person for HCCPS, and the final decision-maker when necessary. Notably given the cooperative element of our school, with this change we set collaborative, facilitative leadership qualities at the forefront of candidate criteria.

The HCCPS Board of Trustees voted to approve this request on May 14, 2024, at a meeting held in compliance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A.

The HCCPS Board of Trustees also authorized the school to work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [Department] to make minor technical changes to the amendment request if such changes are necessary to meet the requirements of statute or regulations and are codified in Department guidance that was not followed in our submission. The HCCPS Board of Trustees agrees to permit such minor technical changes to the policy submitted for approval, and to support any additional consultation and coordination with the Department that will be required to align our policy with requirements.

As shown in our 2022-2023 Annual report, the HCCPS is an academic success, is a viable organization, and is faithful to the terms of its charter:



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

1. Hilltown has created and sustained an interconnected community of children and adults with a high degree of family involvement.
2. Students at Hilltown learn through a hands-on, experiential, interdisciplinary approach to learning with an emphasis on the arts.
3. Students at Hilltown develop strong foundational skills.
4. Hilltown uses a consensus-based governance structure.
5. Hilltown successfully cultivates children's curiosity, critical thinking, and individual voice.

The HCCPS Board of Trustees requests your approval of this amendment as soon as possible.

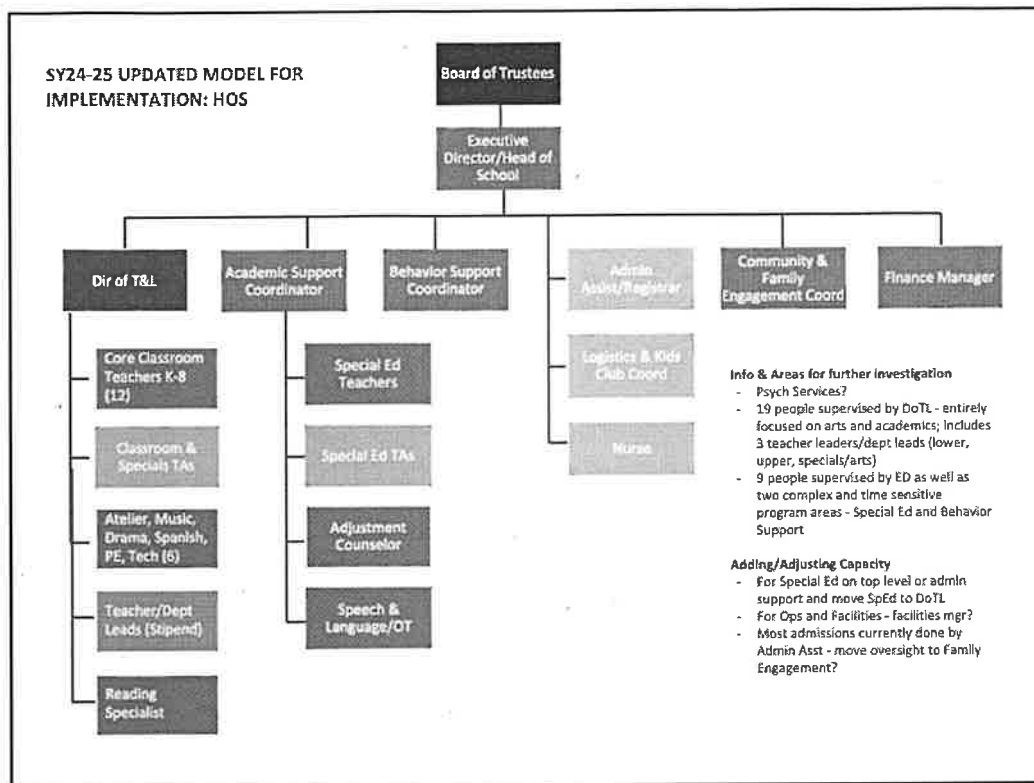
Please contact Kathleen Hulton at [khulton@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:khulton@hilltowncharter.org) or 413-262-7831 if you have any questions about this request.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hulton  
President, Board of Trustees

*C: Kate Saccento, Director of Administration, [ksaccento@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:ksaccento@hilltowncharter.org)  
Christopher Kusek, Incoming Head of School, [ckusek@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:ckusek@hilltowncharter.org)  
Lily Newman, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Board of Trustees Vice  
President, [lnewman@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:lnewman@hilltowncharter.org)  
Ben Carlis, Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School Board of Trustees Vice  
President, [bcarlis@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:bcarlis@hilltowncharter.org)  
Alyssa Hopkins, Assistant Director of the Office of Charter Schools and School  
Redesign, [Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov](mailto:Alyssa.K.Hopkins@mass.gov)*

Enclosures



This model elevates the role of HOS/ED to broad oversight. It gives the HOS/ED more responsibility and tasks, including two complex buckets of work in SpEd and behavior support which had previously been split across the Directors. However, with the addition of a very high capacity Behavior Support Coordinator and Head of School candidates with robust Special Education backgrounds, this organizational chart aligns best with school needs and the talent and capacity of our team. This enables deep focus on teaching and learning for the DoTL, an area that needs close care and attention. With this focus and more support for Tier 1 instruction and classroom management, given the nature of most of our disciplinary challenges, we believe many challenging behaviors will be proactively addressed.

As a community, we've looked closely at the pros and cons below.

**Pros:**

- Can attract more seasoned administrator with the salary, title and positionality
- Less dependent with two new leader vacancies on the ability of co-directors to work seamlessly together
- Can enable streamlined communication and one primary go-to person for the BoT and community
- Enables an emerging leader to grow into the DoTL role with daily support

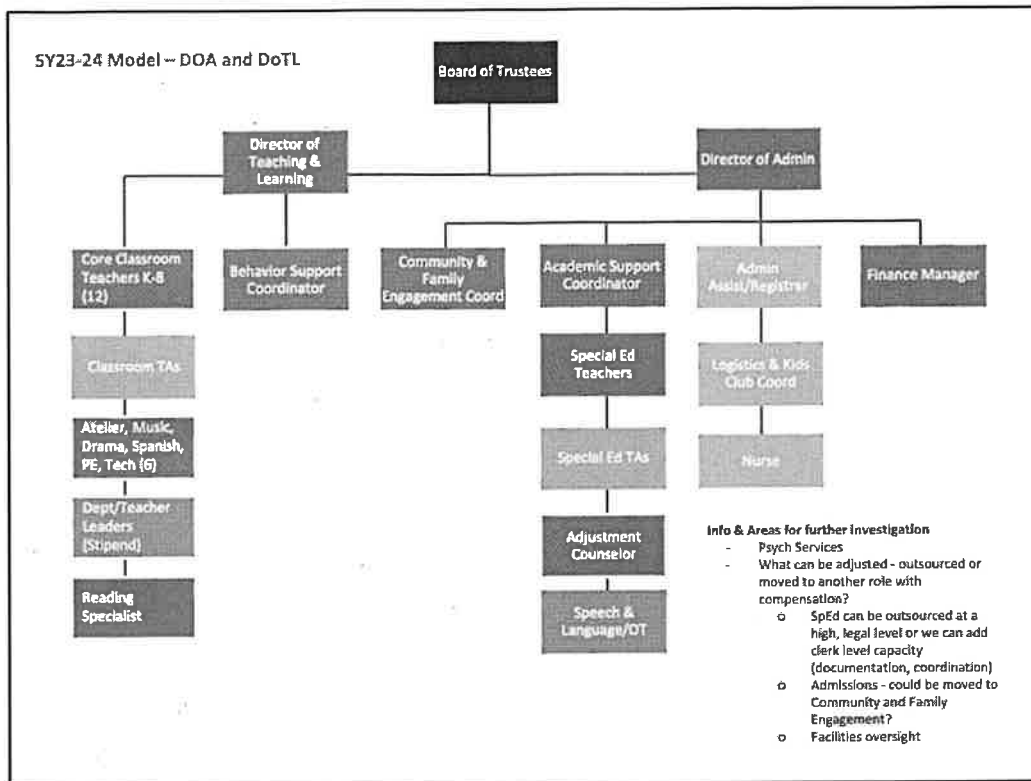
from the ED

- Facilitates clear decision-making approaches and streamlined management systems
- Enables robust support for the DoTL, onsite, in the work
- Positions the BoT to focus on the higher level strategy and governance with the HOS as sole direct report

Cons:

- Large role for the ED and more of a HOS since it has to toggle between high level external initiatives and student-facing behavior response - would need strong team in place at next level
- Changes the structure we're accustomed to - creates a bigger pay differential between teaching and admin roles which could affect the sense of "cooperative."





This model shares responsibility and tasks between co-directors, mostly aligned to the current model. The two complex buckets of work in SpEd and behavior support are split across the Directors.

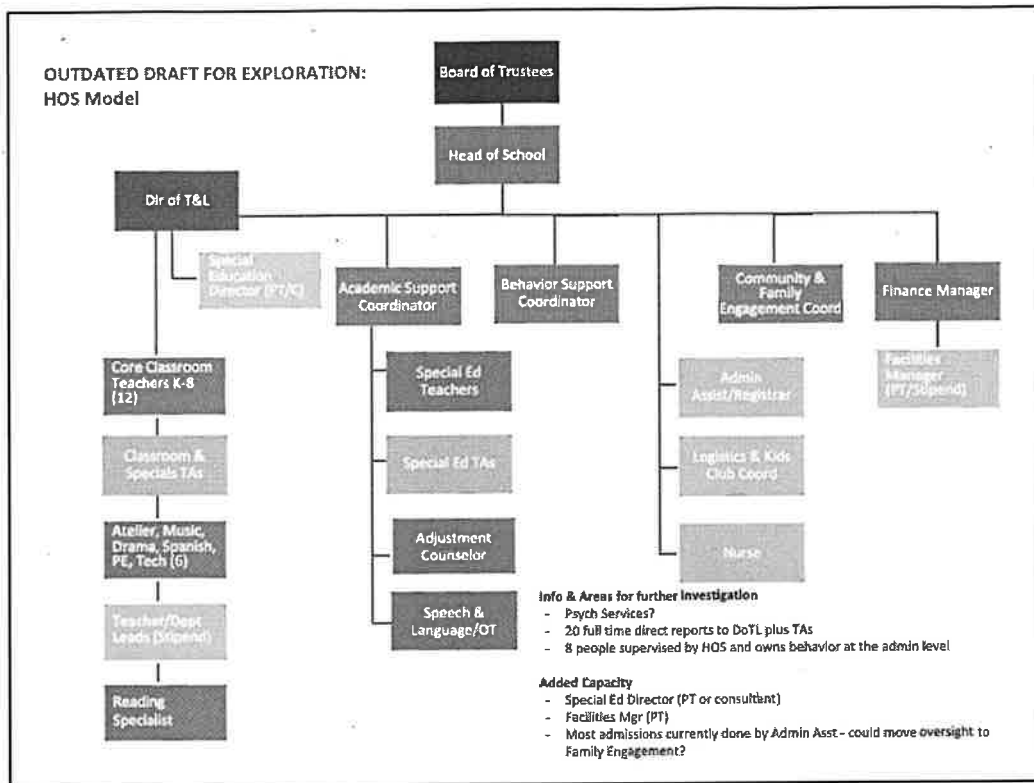
#### Pros:

- Shares the complex work across two team members
- Maintains the current structure and collaborative leadership model - gives each leader a true thought and leadership partner
- May enable someone with less deep administrative experience to take on the DOA role
- May enable the new team to flex across the roles in ways that match their interests and skillsets

#### Cons:

- Does not address some of the issues we've had with this model, including requiring the BoT to supervise two very student-focused roles and retaining the division of labor and communication with the community - would be very tricky for the BoT to supervise a brand new leader
- Bigger role for the DoTL and may limit candidates we can consider as requires admin background with behavior support systems or Special Education and given the role would be supervised by the BoT, consideration is needed as to capacity/newness

- Does not give the DoTL a deep focus on arts and academics
- Doesn't expand the candidate pool beyond a certain level given the co-director model and the subsequent salaries
- Requires a different level of synergy between the two leaders than required in a hierarchy



Given our selection of an internal DOTL without Special Education administration experience, this organizational structure is no longer viable. This model splits the two complex areas previously owned by the ED/HOS, with Special Education owned by the DoTL and Behavior Support oversight by the HOS. These areas of focus could be flipped depending on candidate profiles. We have also included high level Special Ed support if the DoTL or HOS needs added expertise. Special Ed support in this manner can be PT or external, but that is not the case for Behavior Support.



# Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

## PROPOSED BOARD OF TRUSTEES BY-LAWS CHANGES - ANNOTATED

*The proposed changes to our current bylaws are indicated below by underlines in blue font for additions and strikeouts in red font for deletions. Any language that is plain text (neither underlined nor struck) is unchanged from the current bylaws. The rationale for and meaning of these changes are italicized.*

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, a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

### ARTICLE I      Name, Purpose, and Location

Sec. 1      The name by which this organization shall be known is the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School ("School").

Sec. 2      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      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          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          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          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          Notice: Notice of the time, place, and purposes of any annual 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          At an annual meeting or a special meeting, if notice has been properly given in accordance with Article 111, 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

- A. 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 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. Requesting the Commissioner's appointment of any new trustees and receiving that approval prior to any new trustees beginning their service as members;
- c. Submitting timely annual reports;
- d. Submitting timely annual independent audits;
- e. Hiring, evaluating, and removing, if necessary, personnel to manage the School's day-to-day operations and holding ~~these Directors~~ these administrators accountable for meeting specified goals;  
*[The struck language and the added language reflect a change in the school leadership structure such that the school no longer has a group of Directors and instead now has mix of administrators with a variety of titles. Therefore, defaulting to the 603 CMR 1.06 (1)(e) language is appropriate]*
- f. Approving and monitoring progress towards meeting the goals of the School's Accountability Plan;
- g. Adopting and revising School policies, including plans for student recruitment and retention;
- h. Responding to complaints in writing as required by 603 CMR § 1.09; and
- i. Ensuring that members of the Board receive an orientation and training regarding their duties and obligations as members of a board of trustees.

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.

- B. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the selection, appointment,

evaluation and/or removal of the ~~Directors of the School~~ Head of School.

*[The struck language and the added language reflect a change in the school leadership structure such that the Head of School will now be responsible for the selection, appointment, evaluation and/or removal of Director/s and these responsibilities will no longer be those of the Board of Trustees. However, the Board of Trustees will be responsible for the selection, appointment, evaluation and/or removal of the Head of School]*

- C. 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.
- D. Board members shall be responsible for determining general School policies while maintaining compliance with state and federal law.
- E. 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.
- F. 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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.

- D. 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).
- E. Permanent employees of the school shall be disqualified from serving as voting members of the Board of Trustees during their time of employment. ~~The two Domain Directors~~ All Domain Council Administrators shall attend and fully participate in Board of Trustee meetings, but not vote.  
*[The struck language and the added language reflect a change in the school leadership structure such that the school no longer has two Directors and instead has a head of School and a Director of Teaching and Learning.]*
- F. 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.
- G. Individual members of the Board of Trustees are considered special public employees of the Commonwealth.
- H. 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).
- I. 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.
- J. 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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. The Board of Trustees shall meet at least quarterly, within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sec. 4 More than fifty percent of the total number of the voting members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Sec.5

- A. 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 will be necessary for the final decision.
- B. Decision by the Board of Trustees requires consensus by a quorum of seated members

**ARTICLE V**

Sec. 1

- A. 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.
- B. The responsibilities of each officer are as follows:

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, ~~the Director of Administration~~, 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.

*[The struck language and the added language reflect a change in the school leadership structure such that the school no longer has a Director of Administration and now instead has a Head of School.]*

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.

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 ~~Director of Administration~~ **Head of School** on financial matters. The Treasurer shall chair finance committee meetings and present financial reports to the Board of Trustees.

*[The struck language and the added language reflect a change in the school leadership structure such that the school no longer has a Director of Administration and now instead has a Head of School.]*

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.

C. Any vacant officer position shall be elected by a quorum 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 at both the special meetings and the annual meeting. Any proposed amendment must be submitted in written form, duplicated, 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.



# Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES BY-LAWS

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.
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- Sec. 3 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 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 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 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 Notice: Notice of the time, place, and purposes of any annual 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 At an annual meeting or a special meeting, if notice has been properly given in accordance with Article 111, 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

- A. 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 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. Requesting the Commissioner's appointment of any new trustees and receiving that approval prior to any new trustees beginning their service as members;
- c. Submitting timely annual reports;
- d. Submitting timely annual independent audits;
- e. 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;
- f. Approving and monitoring progress towards meeting the goals of the School's Accountability Plan;
- g. Adopting and revising School policies, including plans for student recruitment and retention;
- h. Responding to complaints in writing as required by 603 CMR § 1.09; and
- i. Ensuring that members of the Board receive an orientation and training regarding their duties and obligations as members of a board of trustees.

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.

- B. The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for the selection, appointment, evaluation and/or removal of the Head of School.
- C. 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.

- D. Board members shall be responsible for determining general School policies while maintaining compliance with state and federal law.
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- F. 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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. 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).
- E. 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.

- F. 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.
- G. Individual members of the Board of Trustees are considered special public employees of the Commonwealth.
- H. 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).
- I. 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.
- J. 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

- A. 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.
- B. 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.
- C. The Board of Trustees shall meet at least quarterly, within the Commonwealth of



Massachusetts.

Sec. 4 More than fifty percent of the total number of the voting members of the Board of Trustees shall constitute a quorum.

Sec.5

- A. 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 will be necessary for the final decision.
- B. Decision by the Board of Trustees requires consensus by a quorum of seated members

#### ARTICLE V

Sec. 1

- A. 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.

- B. The responsibilities of each officer are as follows:

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.

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.

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.

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.

- C. Any vacant officer position shall be elected by a quorum 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 at both the special meetings and the annual meeting. Any proposed amendment must be submitted in written form, duplicated, 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 HCCPS Hiring Policy**

It is the policy of Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) to hire without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability. Hiring processes reflect the many perspectives within the school community. Decisions regarding hiring are made by a hiring committee as defined in more complete hiring procedures to follow, or by the supervising director for positions that are less than .5 FTE or otherwise do not require a hiring committee.

All current, regular employees of HCCPS are considered internal candidates providing they meet minimum qualifications for open positions. As such they will automatically be interviewed. LongTerm Substitutes who work a minimum of 50% of a full year position will also be considered internal candidates.

Professional references and public-facing media will be checked prior to an offer of employment. Offers of employment are contingent on a satisfactory background check, including a CORI check for all employees and a fingerprint record for all regular (non-substitute) employees.

## **DRAFT Hiring Procedure for Internal Candidates for Teachers and Coordinators**

When a vacancy for a teacher or coordinator position occurs, all staff will be notified in writing and given the opportunity to express interest in the position within ten (10) calendar days of the posting.

For current teachers interested in moving into an open teaching position, this constitutes a request to change their teaching assignment. The Director of Teaching and Learning will meet with interested teacher(s) and may make this decision without forming a hiring committee. If there is more than one internal candidate interested in the open position, the Director of Teaching and Learning may choose to form a hiring committee and follow the procedures below.

For other qualified staff applying for teacher or coordinator positions—including teaching assistants and longterm substitutes—the supervising director will follow the general hiring procedures for the internal applicant(s) prior to considering external applicants. As appropriate, the hiring committee may exempt applicants from some of the hiring procedure steps (e.g., skills assessment, staff interview, and parent/caregiver interview).

The Committee will decide on one of the options listed below. Decisions are based on consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the supervising director makes final decisions regarding next steps.

- Offer the staff member the position
- Proceed with the external search process and provide the staff member the option to continue as a candidate
- Not offer the staff member the position

## **DRAFT Hiring Procedures for Teachers and Coordinators**

The procedures outlined below apply to the hiring of teachers and coordinators in half-time or over positions. Positions that do not fall under one of these categories are hired at the discretion of the supervising director. The Board of Trustees manages hiring of directors that they supervise under separate procedures.

### **Hiring procedures for teachers and coordinators follow these steps:**

1. **Post the Job:** The supervising director will finalize the job description and post the position internally and/or externally based on the type of position. The posting includes a short description of HCCPS, minimum and preferred position qualifications, salary range, and primary position responsibilities. Interim positions must be clearly identified at this step.
2. **Form the Hiring Committee:** The supervising director will chair and choose members of a hiring committee, considering prior experience and expertise, with a preference for those who have not recently served on a hiring committee. The hiring committee is composed of:

- a. Supervising director
  - b. Board of Trustees representative (responsible for compliance with hiring procedures)
  - c. Teacher representative
  - d. Parent/caregiver representative (may not have a child enrolled in or entering grades relevant to the posted position, if applicable)
3. **Conduct a Hiring Committee Orientation:** The supervising director coordinates an in-person or virtual orientation with committee members. Prior to the orientation, committee members are responsible to review anti-bias hiring materials (examples below):
- a. Bias-free Hiring Quick Reference Guide
  - b. The Bias of "Professionalism" Standards
  - c. Why So Many Organizations Stay White
  - d. Inclusive Interviewing Practices

At the orientation, hiring committee members review the hiring policy and procedures, timeline, committee responsibilities, job description, and confidentiality requirements. The supervising director shares application materials received to date and indicates how additional application materials will be shared with committee members.

4. **Review Applicant Materials and Select Initial Interview Candidates:** Hiring committee members review all applicant materials and provide input about which candidates should be selected for an initial interview. The committee decides by consensus on which candidates to invite to participate. Prior to the initial interviews, the committee agrees upon a set of initial interview questions that will be asked of all candidates.
5. **Conduct Initial Interviews:** The hiring committee meets with each selected candidate for a interview based on the predetermined interview questions with flexibility for clarification and follow up questions.
6. **Select Finalists:** Based on the initial interviews, the hiring committee selects finalists to complete the remaining steps in the process. Decisions are based on consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the supervising director makes final decision.
7. **Conduct Skills Assessment, Staff Interview, and Parent/Caregiver Interview for All Candidates:** The following finalist hiring procedure components may occur in any order.
- a. Skills Assessment:
    - i. For teaching positions: The candidate teaches a 30-50-minute lesson to Hilltown students in the grade level(s) of the open position, or in as similar a context as

possible to the open position. The hiring committee may provide guidance, a focus area, or prompt for the candidate to teach (e.g., a curriculum standard). Members of the hiring committee observe the lesson. The hiring committee conducts a short debrief with the candidate after the lesson in which the candidate is invited to reflect. Student participants are given the opportunity to provide written feedback to the hiring committee.

- ii. For coordinator positions: The hiring committee will devise a skills assessment task related to the position (e.g., a hypothetical staff discussion question, a task involving staff or students, discussing action steps around a hypothetical scenario, etc.). The hiring committee conducts a short debrief with the candidate after the task in which the candidate is invited to reflect.
  - b. **Staff Interview:** Prior to interviews, the staff representative on the hiring committee solicits interview questions from all staff members and synthesizes them into a set of questions with input from the rest of the hiring committee. Candidates are asked to prepare a short activity to facilitate with the group prior to the interview (e.g., icebreaker, team-building activity, cooperative task, etc.). The hiring committee invites all current staff members to participate in the interviews, which include the candidate-led activity and predetermined interview questions. Participants are given the opportunity to provide written feedback to the hiring committee.
  - c. **Parent/Caregiver Interview:** Prior to interviews, the parent/caregiver representative on the hiring committee solicits interview questions from all current Hilltown families and synthesizes them into a set of questions with input from the rest of the hiring committee. The hiring committee invites all current parents/caregivers to participate in the interviews in which the hiring committee asks the predetermined interview questions. Participants are given the opportunity to provide written feedback to the hiring committee.
8. **Decide Final Recommendations:** Hiring committee members review all collected feedback from the finalist process, discuss the set of final candidates, and make hiring recommendations. This can include recommending one or more candidates for hire in ranked order as well as recommendations not to hire specific candidates. Decisions are based on consensus. In the event consensus cannot be reached, the supervising director makes final decision regarding making an offer or declaring a failed search. The hiring committee may formulate questions for references at this stage. If no candidates are recommended for hire, this is considered a failed search and the hiring procedures start again from the beginning.
  9. **Check References:** The supervising director or designee(s) from the hiring committee ensure that at least two professional references and public-facing media are checked for any candidate at some point prior to making an offer of employment.

10. **Make Employment Offer(s):** The supervising director makes an employment offer beginning with the first choice candidate and moving in ranked order as necessary. If no recommended candidate accepts an offer of employment, this is considered a failed search and the hiring procedures start again from the beginning.
11. **Communicate Outcomes:** The supervising director announces new hires to the Hilltown community. At the next Board of Trustees meeting, the BoT representative on the hiring committee confirms that the hiring procedures were followed with fidelity.

### **DRAFT Emergency Hiring Procedures for Teacher Positions**

The Director of Teaching and Learning may choose to use the emergency hiring procedures if a position that is on the teacher salary scale becomes open fewer than 20 days before the start of the school year or any time during the school year up until 20 days before the end of the school year. The position must be posted as a long-term sub (defined as a substitute position lasting more than twenty (20) days. In this event, the Director of Teaching and Learning will decide the necessary and relevant steps in the standard hiring procedures in order to streamline the process. An emergency hiring process and a standard hiring process may differ in some or all of the following ways:

- The position may be posted internally and externally at once.
- Parental and/or board member involvement on the hiring committee is not required
- Size of the hiring committee may be smaller than that of a standard hiring process
- The timeline for accepting resumes and conducting interviews may be shorter
- Skills assessment, staff interview, and/or parent interviews may be skipped



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

JEDI Committee Meeting Minutes- June 14th, 2024  
12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

**Present:** Kathleen Szegda, Seth Harwood, Cinzia Pica, Laura Davis

**Regrets:** Garrett Washington, Natalia Korczak, Angelique Baker, Seth Harwood, Camille Washington-Ottobre

Topic	Discussion	Action
Updates	Safe and Supportive schools - did self-assessment; working on belonging, particularly BIPOC and LGBTQ - training teachers to be more comfortable addressing; working on systems and structures. Includes a data team to review data and make recommendations based on the data. Important to have education with parents too, including on gender and pronouns.	
Initial Draft JEDI Plan	Plan drafted based on discussions and work of JEDI committee this year, equity audit findings, long range plan, and work taking place in the school. Vetted with teachers at teacher meeting on 6/14/24 and teachers in agreement with plan. Reviewed plan and discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- leadership/administration - add in something on ongoing education; currently doesn't include admin</li><li>- Curriculum revision process - add, it is in LRP but pushed out a year</li></ul>	Kathleen to double-check LRP and see if anything else needed
Climate Survey	tabled discussion	





HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

JEDI Committee Goals	Most items in goals achieved this year or incorporated into draft JEDI Plan. Regarding ongoing feedback, discussed the importance of doing exit interviews with staff/teachers of color leaving the school since there are staff of color leaving after this school year. Laura will help Kathleen connect on exit interviews	Kathleen will coordinate. Seth will help to do them with Kathleen.
Next meeting time/date/location	TBD	Kathleen will send poll to schedule new meeting time
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.	1:30 p.m.