

**Holyoke Community Charter School
2200 Northampton Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
Board of Trustees**

Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – March 8, 2023

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Li-Jun Ma (entered at 5:08 pm, after approval of minutes, exited at 5:13 pm due to technical difficulties, returned at 6:01 pm), Lina Rivera, Rafael Rodriguez, Jean Swinney

Guests: Sonia Correa Pope, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin, Vanessa Pillegi, Elka Sachs, Bettina Toner

Not Present: Janine Kent

I. Meeting called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Leona Florek.

II. **Board Reports**

Board Mail/Folder

None

Public comments/none.

III. **Approval of Minutes**

Jean Swinney moved to approve the minutes of the January 26, 2023 regular meeting. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Jean Swinney moved to rearrange the meeting agenda, to facilitate discussion of the Proposed Education Service Provider (SABIS) Contract with Attorneys. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. **New Business**

- Proposed Education Service Provider (SABIS) Contract with Attorneys
Bettina Toner, of Krokidas & Bluestein LLP, presented the contract with SABIS comments. She stated that even if all items cannot be resolved it would be good to communicate with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as to where the board is in the process. She then reviewed the two items to resolve: sec 4.3 (responsibility of director to implement curriculum) and sec 5.3.3 (termination by SEM for cause). The board discussed these two sections and their potential impact and implementation. Ideas discussed were the language around material breach of contract and arbitration. The board and guests further discussed issues around having a linear response to a multidimensional challenge (social, environmental factors, in addition to curriculum) that reflects on student learning outcomes and providing accommodations

for those factors. Dr. Sonia Correa Pope discussed measurements around implementing the SABIS philosophy with fidelity, especially in the context of Special Education, English Learners, and the particular population of HCCS. She stated that using only test scores (MCAS) would not be an accurate measure of implementation.

SABIS representatives made a point of clarification and context, explaining the sections in terms of the need for a balance between less EMO oversight and ensuring that if a director/board is not willing to implement key tenants of the SABIS system, there would be a way for SABIS to separate from the board/school. It was also mentioned that if changes/alterations are made with SABIS approval, that would not be considered as a failure of implementation.

Elka Sachs, of Krokidas & Bluestein LLP, discussed that the implications of these two sections would be consequences if the school failed to implement the SABIS system. The highlighted section (5.3.3) indicates that if a separation is made half-way through the year for any termination of cause that there would be payment through the end of year before services are provided.

The board discussed the vagueness of language in the contract dealing with the subjectivity in how/who decides if the SABIS system is not being implemented. The SABIS representative stated that SABIS would bring any concerns with implementation to the board, who then would make a final say over whether implementation would happen or not. The board decided they would like different terminology to protect both parties equally and asked Bettina to create different language to replace “materially fail to implement”- critiquing for equity and fairness for both parties.

Rafael Rodriguez moved to request Krokidas & Bluestein LLP to submit language changes in sections 4.3 and 5.3.3 in the Proposed Education Service Provider (SABIS) Contract to SABIS counsel. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Bettina and Elka exited the meeting at 5:53 pm.

V. Facilities

Tom Paquin reported that the school is putting together a budget for gym equipment and is working on installation of fire alarm and anti-theft alarm for the new construction. He also stated that he is putting together the facilities budget to upkeep the current building due to regular wear and tear, including restroom fixtures. He reminded the board that the April meeting will begin with a tour of the new building.

Tom reported that there was a water heater leak, and it is scheduled to be replaced the next day. He stated that a school water improvement grant was received, and facilities will be installing eight bottle filling stations throughout the building.

Ryan Meek inquired about the issue with duct work in the new building and any response from Kastle Boos. Tom replied that the owner did apologize verbally, but provided nothing in writing;

Rob and Dan continue to work on this issue. Tom suggested bringing them to a board meeting for a formal response. It will be added to the April meeting.

VI. **Membership**

Lina Rivera moved to renew Jean Swinney’s term for an additional three years. Seconded by Li-Jun Ma. Jean Swinney accepted the vote for renewal. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. **Finances**

Board members reviewed the financial reports for January and found no concerns. **Lina Rivera motioned to approve the financial report for January. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

VIII. **Old Business**

- **Parent Connection Liaison Rubric**
Will be moved to a future meeting

IX. **Director’s Report**

- Enrollment is at 692; lottery was conducted in February results will be reported in April meeting
- Academics – targeted parent/teacher conferences held in February and approximately 145 parents were invited; conducting high school transition meeting for 8th graders (Holyoke High and Dean came to present to 8th graders with a field trip to the campuses)
- Student Management - Monthly Positive Student assemblies are being held to recognize positive student behaviors (target post-COVID social/emotional behaviors)
- Professional Development is ongoing
- DESE Charter School Site Visit is upcoming
- Student Life: Family Food Pantry in collaboration with Stop & Shop is tomorrow and local media will be highlighting the event; International Day is April 29 11 am – 1 pm “Seven Wonders of the World”; the Cheerleaders will march in the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade
- Student Management: reviewed suspension data
- Open House will be held on March 25 from 11-1

Jean Swinney motioned to adjourn the meeting. Lina Rivera seconded. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

January 26, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Monthly Financial Report