

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

Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – April 26, 2023

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Janine Kent, Li-Jun Ma (entered at 6:09 pm, after tour of building),
Lina Rivera, Rafael Rodriguez (exited at 7:28 pm, after DESE Site Visit
discussion), Jean Swinney (entered at 6:09 pm, after tour of building)

Guests: Diana Abdel Samad, Jay Breines (exited at 5:45, during tour of building), Sonia
Correa Pope, Rebecca Ducharme (exited at 6:53), Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin
(exited at 6:02 pm, after tour of building), Vanessa Pillegi, Benjamin Torres
(entered at 6:30, after Finance), Larry Trim (exited at 6:53), Omar Zouhairy

Not Present: N/A

I. Meeting began at 5:39 p.m. with a tour of the new gymnasium/classroom construction. Larry Trim from Kaestle Boos and Rebecca Ducarme, the project representative from P3, led the board members and guests through the atrium, gymnasium, bathrooms, locker room, and classrooms pointing out features. Tom Paquin reported local volleyball teams have already been in contact with the school about possible rental of gymnasium for games. Board members discussed possible limits on rental income. The tour ended at 6:02 p.m.

II. Sit-down meeting called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Leona Florek.

III. **Board Reports**

Board Mail/Folder

None

Public comments/none.

IV. **Approval of Minutes**

Rafael Rodriguez moved to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2023 regular meeting. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Jean Swinney moved to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2023 special meeting. Seconded by LiJun Ma. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

Lina Rivera moved to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2023 special meeting. Seconded by Rafael Rodriguez. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

V. **Finances**

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

Ryan Meek presented the budget for FY 2024 and the End-of-Year Forecast for FY 23 to the board. He discussed state-wide budget increases to tuition revenue of 15%; reviewed staff costs and increased funding of salaries; increased funding to support/enhance team sports and performing arts; proposal of adding a school bus and route to Springfield to increase enrollment. Ryan stated that all debt ratios passed.

The board discussed decreased revenue if under enrollment target, increased Special Education spending due to 20% increase in Special Education student enrollment, increase in furniture/fixtures and building/grounds and updates to current bathrooms and gym floor overlay. Maria Rodriguez reported that the attendance bonus for teachers is being increased and a 403 B matching program for eligible staff. Sonia Pope reported that increased funding for salaries will allow her and SABIS to set new entry level for teachers, attract new highly qualified staff, and retain qualified staff. Janine Kent asked that a discussion about cash reserves be added to the next meeting agenda.

Janine Kent motioned to approve the FY 2024 budget and the End-of-Year Forecast for FY 23. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. **Facilities**

Larry Trim from Kaestle Boos introduced himself to the board. Rebecca Ducharme from P3 introduced herself. Rebecca reported that the sidewalk was being laid and the field will be graded and seeded very soon. She stated the rooftop units will be turned on inside the new building and once the climate is stable, the floor, hoops, and scoreboard can be installed. She reported the project is on schedule and a finish date of mid-June is expected.

Li-Jun inquired about the mistake with the duct work that occurred. Larry reported it is an “unfortunate circumstance”. Jean Swinney and board members asked if there is a plan to compensate the school monetarily and what steps Kaestle Boos and P3 have taken to rectify the situation. Larry and Rebecca described the process of keeping a log that is rectified at the end of the project by working with the contract and contractors to discuss fault. He stated the OPM and the design team will walk through this process with the board and that the school would never be considered at fault.

Ryan Meek asked if there could be a statement made by the designers or general contractors that the change order for the duct work will be addressed. Larry replied it would not be as simple as someone admitting fault and he stated that there are contingencies to handle these kinds of issues. He stated it is more cost effective to finish the project.

Sonia Pope inquired about the process of obtaining a certificate of occupancy. Larry discussed a retainage of 5% that is issued to the General Contractor only after all parties are satisfied. Larry and Rebecca exited the meeting at 6:53 pm.

The Board discussed that the response was not enlightening and they still want to be given a better understanding about the resolution of the mistake and timeline for gaining a certificate of occupancy. Janine mentioned the cost of the change order for duct work was a small percentage of the full project. The Board further discussed the lack of information up front about the process of logging incidents. The members would like Kaestle Boos to communicate to the board an understanding that they will ethically do their due diligence to rectify the mistake and pay back the school.

VII. Old Business

Sonia Pope presented the proposal for a change to school hours to the board. The proposal is to begin the school day at 7:50 am and end at 3:10 pm, which would add up to 945 structured learning time hours for the academic year. She discussed reasons for the proposed change:

- a way to remain competitive to surrounding districts (Holyoke, Springfield, Chicopee) in both student and teacher/staff recruitment and retention
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) requirement for 900 hours of structured learning time in elementary school level
- Teacher and staff feedback on length of school day

Sonia reiterated this change would keep the same number of periods for students. She reported to the board that this would require the school to submit an amendment to DESE.

Benjamin Torres reviewed the proposed daily schedule with the board pointing out arrival and dismissal time, lunch and snack schedules, retention of Student Life period, and minimal cuts to student learning time.

The Board discussed the proposed schedule change. They thanked Benjamin and Sonia for their hard work on this with a focus on the kids.

Jean Swinney motioned to accept the proposed change for school hours with SABIS approval. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business

● Approval of the 2023-2024 Academic Calendar:

Sonia Pope presented the 2023-2024 Academic Year calendar to the board. She pointed out that the February vacation was added back into the calendar at teacher and family requests and that MCAS dates are tentatively planned until DESE releases the official schedule.

Janine Kent made a note to edit "No School Spring Break", by adding a hyphen to clarify. Diana Abdel Samad noted that there would need a minor change to state there was "No School" from December 25 - January 1. She also noted that March 20 should be marked as "School Closed/Good Friday".

Janine Kent motioned to approve the 2023-2024 Academic Year calendar. Rafael Rodriguez seconded. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez - Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

● DESE Site Visit - May 2, 2023:

Sonia Pope stated that DESE will be on-site for a shortened visit from 8 am to 2 pm on May 2. She mentioned that Leona Florek and Jean Swinney would be the Board representatives for a virtual meeting with DESE on May 1; Diana Abdel Samad and Mahdi Kansou will meet with DESE as the EMO representatives virtually as well.

● Vote to approve revised Bullying Policy and Prevention Plan:

Sonia Pope presented the Board with the revisions to the Bullying Policy and Prevention Plan.

Janine Kent motioned to approve the revised Bullying Policy and Prevention Plan. LiJun Ma seconded. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Ma - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.

● Education Service Provider Evaluation and School Director Evaluation:

Sonia Pope presented the Board with the Education Service Provider Evaluation and School Director Evaluation and reviewed the components of each and the process.

The board will review both evaluations and vote to approve in the next meeting.

IX. **Director's Report**

- HCCS 8th graders were awarded a special prize by the Governor for their Civics Project. Dr. Pope, the upper school Academic Quality Controller (AQC), and the students visited the statehouse today to be recognized.
- Enrollment is at 691; lottery was held in March and there was an increase in applications - Kindergarten classes for Fall 2023 are full and there are waitlists for other grade levels.
- Academics – SABIS, Deputy, and AQCs have been engaging in conversations around Math curriculum; a Professional Learning Community has been formed for the new DESE Dyslexia Screening requirement; the school achieved the targeted ELA MCAS participation rate
- Student Management - suspensions reviewed
- Professional Development is ongoing
- Student Life: International Day is April 29 from 11 am to 1 pm with the theme “Seven Wonders of the World”; the school’s soccer teams participated in indoor tournaments in Northampton
- Recent & Upcoming events reviewed: highlighted Student/Staff Positive Spirit Day (held once/month) that is intended to reinforcing community spirit and positive behaviors by highlighting student behaviors
- Student injury at bus stop - bus stop location has been moved

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski
Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney
Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

March 8, 2023 Meeting Minutes
March 23, 2023 Meeting Minutes
April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes
Monthly Financial Report
FY24 Budget
FY23 End-Of-Year Forecast
Proposed Change to School Hours Schedule
Revised Bullying Policy and Prevention Plan
2023-2024 Academic Calendar
Education Service Providers Evaluation
School Director's Education Providers Report