

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

Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – June 22, 2022

In Attendance: Cynthia Dennis, Leona Florek, Janine Kent (entered at 5:42 pm, during Director’s Report), Li-Jun Ma, Lina Rivera, Rafael Rodriguez, Jean Swinney

Guests: Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin, Vanessa Pileggi, Sonia Pope, Maria Rodriguez

Not Present: Jay Breines

I. Meeting called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Leona Florek.
Public comments/none.

II. **Approval of Minutes**
Cynthia Dennis moved to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2022 regular meeting. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Abstain, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed.

III. **Board Reports**

Board Mail

None

Finances

The board reviewed the financial reports for May and found no issues. **Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve the financial report for May. Seconded by Li-Jun Ma. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Facilities

Tom Paquin updated the board on the gymnasium project. He reported that the window film installation on the Garden Room windows is almost complete and looks good. Tom shared a drone photo of the construction site and the new sign announcing the gym project. Tom then stated that \$192,000 still remains in contingency balance, and there are no new requests for change orders. P3 will be talking to the board about a driveway wrap around, hopefully in July. Tom then reported that Durham Transportation was the only response to the transportation RFP; the contract was signed and remained the same as the previous contract - 3 years and then 2 additional years.

IV. **Old Business**

- **Approval of the Education Service Provider (SABIS) Evaluation**
Leona Florek presented the evaluation to the board, which was also provided to board members via email prior to the meeting. The board discussed concern about the learning loss from COVID in terms of academic data results both at the school and as a trend for the

entire state. Dr. Sonia Pope discussed the importance of HCCS being able to continue teaching remotely during the pandemic closure and reported that the Commissioner is stating this will have effects for the next 2-3 years. **Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve the Education Service Provider (SABIS) Evaluation for the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Seconded by Lina Rivera. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

- Approval of the School Director’s Evaluation

Leona Florek presented the evaluation to the board, which was also provided to board members via email prior to the meeting. She stated that there were comments made in the evaluation by Dr. Sonia Pope. Sonia reported on the two comments to the board: (1) after the final evaluation discussion with SABIS on section 2, one of the measures was eliminated and (2) the enrollment measure in section 3 was corrected to reflect that she met the same criteria as SABIS. Sonia stated that she will have a discussion with Mahdi Kansou at SABIS regarding the waitlist objective for next year to come up with a new measurement that better reflects current DESE requirements. She also discussed clarifying the expectation on section 3 item 2 for the next academic year. **Rafael Rodriguez motioned to approve the School Director’s Evaluation for the 2020-2021 Academic Year. Seconded by Cynthia Dennis. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney – Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

- DESE review of contract with Education Service Provider (SABIS)

Leona Florek opened the discussion by giving an overview of the contract revisions required by DESE. She stated that the board has hired Elcha Sachs from Korkidas and Bluestein LLC for legal representation. Cynthia Dennis reported that Raipher Pellegrino will be representing SABIS and that Amy Wesley and Mahdi Kansou will be working closely with the board and legal representation on the contract revisions.

- Annual Report draft update

Dr. Sonia Pope stated that the update on the Annual Report draft will be part of her Director’s Report.

V. New Business

- 2022-2023 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule discussion

The board discussed the possibility of meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, instead of the 4th Wednesday and agreed that Janine Kent would need to be consulted in terms of her availability. They also discussed having in-person meetings begin at 5:30 pm. A final draft of the schedule will be voted on in the July meeting.

- July Board meeting date

Leona Florek stated that she would not be available for the original scheduled meeting on July 27. The board discussed the need to keep the July meeting for the 4th Wednesday in order for financial reports and Annual Report final draft to be available. The board agreed to keep the meeting on July 27.

- Student mental health

The board discussed the recent mass shootings and the need to have school-based supports for stress, anxiety, and mental health. The board talked about the success of the current supports that school does offer. Dr. Sonia Pope reported that the school has three counselors along with five student management staff (including the Student Management coordinator). Counselors and student management staff greet students every morning upon entry and purposefully follow up and talk with students who may need support. She stated that the school's social-emotional supports are designed to be proactive, instead of reactive.

VI. **Administrative Reports/School Director**

Director's Report - Dr. Sonia Pope reported:

- Review of enrollment; retention challenges due to student relocation to other cities; recruitment efforts at the Holyoke Mall for advertising; marketing firm consultation; summer school as a retention effort
- COVID 19 report: data on positive cases
- Academic Update: teacher evaluations conducted June 21 with salary increases; exit interviews were mostly positive with most staff reporting they are returning next year; four teachers resigned due to personal reasons; report cards will be mailed next week; summer school invites for July 5-21
- Annual Report schedule update reviewed
- Professional Development: Ongoing
- Student Life: 8th grade trip to Washington DC was successful; Holyoke Gas and Electric visited K-2 on fire safety; Honoring our Families event; Field Day
- Student Management: Suspension data reviewed
- Upcoming events reviewed
- Highlights from the exit survey with teachers (full data will be reported to board later this summer)

Leona Florek asked about the plan in place to hire a new Parent Connection Liaison. Sonia reported that she will be conducting interviews to fill the position. Leona asked the stipend amount be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Jean Swinney discussed advertising the school with a digital sign at the top of the driveway on Route 5 as a cost-saving measure. Sonia stated that she will look into the cost; Tom Paquin reported that a permit from the city would be required.

Janine Kent asked Sonia if she could get a student alumni perspective on length of the school day. Janine discussed the impact of social isolation and loneliness on children and possibly using a voluntary survey for parents to help assess degrees of loneliness and isolation. Board discussed the pandemic's impact on the brain and learning centers of the brain and the importance of student emotional supports and the need to increase this in the school.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

May 25, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Monthly Financial Report

ESP Evaluation

School Director's Evaluation

School Director's Education Providers Report