

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

**Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – September 27, 2023**

In Attendance: Leona Florek, Janine Kent, Lina Rivera, Rafael Rodriguez, Jean Swinney

Guests: Sonia Correa Pope, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Dan Pallotta, Tom Paquin,  
Vanessa Pillegi, Rob Todisco, Maria Rodriguez, Haley Saltares

Not Present: Li-Jun Ma

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Meeting called to order at 5:20 p.m. by Leona Florek.

I. **Approval of Minutes**

**Lina Rivera moved to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2023 regular meeting. Seconded by Jean Swinney. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Rivera – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

II. **Board Reports**

Board Mail/Folder  
None

Public comments/none.

III. **Facilities**

Rob Todisco reported on the progress of the gym and certificate of occupancy. He reported that the installation of the upper bleachers is nearing completion, and the certificate should be in hand within the next few days. Once the certificate is in hand, full authority to occupy the building will be allowed. Sonia Correa Pope inquired about the next steps if something were to go wrong once the certificate is given, Daniel Pallotta assured that there is a 1-year warranty if something major were to go wrong within the building. Jean Swinney inquired about the change order and money that is owed regarding the architectural error, Daniel Pallotta ensures that once the certificate is in hand, next steps of action will be taken.

Rob Todisco and Dan Pallotta exited the meeting at 5:54 pm.

IV. **Finances**

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

Janine Kent asked Maria Rodriguez about the annual increase to insurance. Maria reported that insurance increase is \$9,000 and it will begin once we get the new certificate for the building. Sonia Correa Pope reported that Maria and herself have been filling the role of the HR department for the past year and a half, and she would like to give a \$10,000 stipend to Maria for her additional work covering that open position. Board discussed finding that money in the budget. **Jean Swinney motioned to pay a stipend to Maria Rodriguez for the work done beyond her job responsibilities in the amount of \$10,000. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Old Business**

N/A

VI. **New Business**

● **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Site Visit Report**

Sonia Correa Pope presented on the DESE Site Visit Criteria that were reported upon for the most recent visit and reviewed the rating for each criteria:

- Faithfulness to Charter – Met
- Access and Equity – Partially Met
  - Due to suspension rate – Sonia reviewed the Action Plan with the Board members to reduce suspensions
- Compliance - (not rated for this visit)
  - Compliance is rated in the Federal Civil Rights, SPED, and ELL Audit
  - Finding on low Inclusion rates (least restrictive environment); the Corrective Action Plan was submitted and approved
- Academic Program Success & Student Performance – to be reviewed with MCAS results next month
- Academic Program Delivery - Met
- Support for All Learners – Met
- Contractual Relationships – Partially Met
  - Due to unapproved contract with the Educational Service Provider
    - Still waiting on DESE for final approval; Sonia reported she contacted DESE and hopes to have a report back to the board for next month
- Governance – Partially Met
  - The report found that the board lacked committees and committee meetings, which are indicated and required in the Board of Trustees Bylaws
    - The board members discussed the lack of having committees due to the small number of board members. They discussed needing to create an action plan to address this issue. There was discussion around possible revision to the board’s bylaws to reflect current membership. The board feels they must establish

a plan that would address recruiting more board members. This plan will be developed at the next Board Retreat meeting. The board then planned creating an Executive and a Finance Committee. Members were identified who would serve on each committee. The Executive Committee will be made up of Leona Florek, Jean Swinney, and Sonia Correa Pope. They will meet every few months and a calendar will be established. The Finance Committee will be made up of Janine Kent, Lina Rivera, Maria Rodriguez, and Ryan Meek. This committee will meet once every two months and a calendar will be established.

- The report indicated that the board should review more academic data (beyond MCAS) on a regular basis.
  - Sonia Correa Pope indicated she will add MAP assessment data to the Director's Report and create an academic dashboard for the board to review on a regular basis. She will develop the dashboard with the academic team and then provide it to the board for comments and approval.
- Board Retreat Meeting Planning

The board discussed setting a date for the annual retreat meeting. Board members felt that a separate day from the regular meeting should be selected and a 5:00 pm start time would be ideal. The meeting will be held virtually. A survey will be sent to board members to select dates beginning in February.

## VII. Director's Report

- Enrollment is at 694; withdrawal reasons were reported – most were due to lack of transportation. Sonia Correa Pope requested that the board consider adding a new bus route to Springfield with two stops in hopes to retain/recruit 20-25 students from that community. Maria Rodriguez noted that this would not be refundable by the state and that it had already been included in the budget at \$72,000.
- Trunk or Treat recruitment activity is planned for Saturday, October 21 from 10 am – 1pm.
- Academic Update: SABIS diagnostic test was administered and data was reviewed in ELA and Math by grade level with the board members; Pope reviewed highly qualified status of teachers and discussed support from SABIS and the academic team with newly hired, or non-highly qualified teachers with monitoring and feedback.
- Strategic Initiatives were reviewed
- Professional Development: ongoing – SABIS and DESE SPED training; academic team at HCCS with SABIS development of teachers: Teach like a champion; common-planning time; ELL workshops
- Student Life: new coordinator is doing well, events/initiatives reviewed; Pope to invite SL prefects to upcoming board meeting
- Student Management: discipline reviewed, no suspensions; Social-Emotional Advising classes for students with infractions; discipline strategies were reviewed
  - Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 levels reviewed with board members
- Recent and Upcoming Events reviewed

**Jean Swinney motioned to accept the director's report. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

Leona Florek reported that Li-Jun Ma has submitted a leave of absence.

**Jean Swinney motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Florek – Aye, Kent - Aye, Rivera - Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.**

*As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski*  
Respectfully submitted,  
Jean Swinney  
Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

Monthly Financial Report  
August 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes  
School Director's Education Providers Report