

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

Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Meeting – December 15, 2021: REGULAR Meeting

In Attendance: Jay Breines (arrived at 6:11 pm); Cynthia Dennis, Leona Florek, Janine Kent (arrived at 5:39 pm); Li-Jun Ma (arrived at 5:37 pm); Jean Swinney (arrived at 5:37 pm); Rafael Rodriguez (arrived at 5:23 pm)

Guests: Tom Paquin, Dan Pelotta, Vanessa Pileggi, Sonia Pope, Maria Rodriguez, Amy Wesley

Not Present: Lina Rivera

I. Meeting called to order at 5:03 p.m. by Leona Florek.
Public comments/none.

II. **Facilities**
Dan Pellotta from P3 presented on the gymnasium/classroom construction project; much pre-construction paperwork is being completed and materials are being ordered. Physical construction will begin with parking lot in late March/early April 2022 with paving during the summer. Dan told the board that a weekly schedule will be provided closer to the construction. Permitting has been completed, except for fire and propane which come closer to the construction. The board discussed the progress and Dan exited the meeting.

Board Mail

None

III. **Finances**
Rafael Rodriguez, Li Jun Ma, Jean Swinney, and Janine Kent arrived to the meeting, providing a quorum.
Cynthia Dennis reviewed the financial reports for October and November and found no issues. **Cynthia Dennis motioned to approve the financial reports for October and November. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.**

IV. **Membership**
Leona Florek reminded all board members who were members in 2020 to complete the 2020 financial disclosure form.

V. **Old Business**
N/A

VI. **Approval of Minutes**
Cynthia Dennis moved to approve the minutes of the October 27 regular meeting and the October 27 retreat meeting. Seconded by Rafael Rodriguez. Each member voted by roll call.

Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Abstain. The motion passed.

VII. **New Business**

- **Special Education Academic Coordinator (SEAC):**
Sonia Pope reported SEAC position has been posted since August when former SEAC resigned. She discussed the lack of candidates along with various recruitment strategies and struggles with filling the position. Sonia presented that for many other districts this is a 10-month position, whereas at HCCS it is a full-year position with a higher salary of \$80,000. Sonia asked board to approve this position with these adjustments. The Board discussed the implications on the student population and the difference from usual SABIS model under the Pillars system. Amy Wesley reported that SABIS concern is consistency across the board and rate of pay; other Pillars comparison with the position. The Board discussed the unique skills and qualifications, recruitment strategies and problems with recruitment nationally across all industries and the need to be creative in ways to fill positions.
Jean Swinney moved to approve the reclassification of the Special Education Academic Coordinator to a 10-month position and the increased salary of \$80,000. Seconded by Rafael Rodriguez. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Review of Federal Procurement Policy:**
Maria Rodriguez reported to the board that a federal requirement came as part of receiving federal grant funds (ESSER) to have a separate and specific policy on Federal Procurement. The school had procedures to handle federal funds, however it had not been formally collected as a written policy. This policy covers reasonableness of purchase, allowable expenses and procurement procedures. Maria presented and reviewed the policy with the board along with the suggested minor edits by Ryan Meek.
Cynthia Dennis moved to approve the policy pending comments/minor edits suggested by Ryan Meek. Seconded by Janine Kent. Each member voted by roll call. Dennis – Aye, Florek – Aye, Kent – Aye, Ma – Aye, Rodriguez – Aye, Swinney - Aye. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Vaccination Policy:**
Jay Breines entered the meeting. Jay discussed that a COVID-19 vaccination mandate at the school would protect students and allow consistent and quality education of students; it would also the school to be a community leader. Sonia Pope reported that 90% of staff is vaccinated, however, parents are less responsive to vaccines for students. The Board discussed having a mandate versus a requirement and the possibility of lawsuits and a need for legal consultation. They also discussed enforcement of a mandate/requirement, religious/medical exemptions, and possible effects on enrollment. Board discussed teacher versus student vaccination. Board asked for SABIS input and Amy Wesley responded that SABIS abides by local and country-wide health standards and is not a medical agency. Sonia reported that there are parents who are opting out of PCR weekly testing. The board asked Sonia Pope to do collect more data around COVID-19 Vaccination Mandates/Requirements by consulting a lawyer and conducting a stakeholder survey to bring back to the next Board meeting.

Administrative Reports/School Director

Director's Report - Dr. Sonia Pope reported:

- Enrollment: difficulties with recruitment and retention; Sonia and the Board discussed effects of COVID-19 on enrollment and possible strategies. Student Enrollment is an item on the Retreat Agenda and will be further discussed.
- COVID 19 report: data on positive cases, quarantine cases and remote learning, increased social distancing at meal times; state air-flow analysis; plexi-glass will be removed in selected elementary, middle school, and grade 7 & 8 classrooms (2 classrooms at each level) at state's guidance to explore the plexi-glass efficacy.
- Academic Update: Open positions reviewed; End-of-Term 1 exams
- Professional Development is ongoing particularly with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Special Education Professional Learning Community
- Student Life Organization (SLO): End-of-Term revision games, Math Jeopardy
- Student Management (SM): discipline reviewed; board discussed aggressive behavior as a result of quarantine, social/emotional issues, and general increase in aggression/stress in society; Sonia reported about the woodcarving club
- Facilities: Tom reported earlier in the meeting
- Recent/upcoming events reviewed
- SABIS support reviewed in the areas of Academics, IT, HR, and Finance
 - The board requested SABIS to provide metrics or a dashboard to allow for setting a baseline and tracking student academic progress closely over the next few years. Amy Wesley responded that performance on Term 1 could be reported in the January meeting.
 - Janine Kent asked about the tax notice regarding funds under the cares act how ADP could be held accountable for mislabeling the school. Maria Rodriguez reported that this was part of the Retreat Agenda and would be discussed further.
 - Janine Kent inquired about what SABIS is doing from an IT perspective on multi-level authentication and cyber protection. Amy responded that she will report on that at the next meeting.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Swinney

Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

October 27, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2021 Retreat Meeting Minutes

Monthly Financial Report

Federal Procurement Policy