

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

Minutes of HCCS Board of Trustees Retreat Meeting – April 13, 2019

In Attendance: Jay Breines, Cynthia Dennis, Leona Florek, Jenna Gable, Janine Kent
Guests: Kyle Callender, Mahdi Kansou, Ryan Meek, Tom Paquin, Sonia Pope, Benjamin Torres
Not Present: Mark Lubold

I. Meeting called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Jenna Gable.

II. **Review and Revision of Board of Trustees Bylaws**

Members reviewed and suggested changes, additions, revision etc. to the current HCCS bylaws. The Board discussed potential changes to the school’s mission. The Board also discussed the make-up and logistics of Governance, Finance, and Academic committees and made edits to this section of the bylaws.

The edits to the bylaws will be reviewed against the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) “Criteria for Bylaws Checklist” and results will be brought to the Board at the May regular meeting and a motion for a vote of approval of amended bylaws and mission will be made.

III. **Board Member Recruitment Strategy**

The Board discussed ways to network in order to recruit potential board members with diverse backgrounds. Potential avenues to explore were brought forward, including BoardOnTrack, attendance at Holyoke community events, and SABIS materials and support to facilitate connections and onboarding.

IV. **Paraprofessional Status**

Dr. Sonia Pope presented on paraprofessional status as non-exempt employees and the effects that has on early release (following teacher’s schedule) and annualized salary options. Mahdi Kansou reported on Department of Labor requirements around non-exempt status and the option given to paraprofessionals and teachers to be paid over a 12-month or 9-month period. The board discussed effects that these two options have

on insurance benefits. The Board agreed to make no changes to paraprofessional non-exempt status and ineligibility for early release. They also asked SABIS to provide all employees with an informational session about payroll and HR during August training to address any misconceptions.

V. **Strategic Plan for the future of HCCS**

5-year Financial Projections

Ryan Meek presented the 5-year financial projections report and went over funding formulas for revenue and then each operating expense line, and answered Board member questions. He reported that the school's debt service obligation will be completed in July 2023 and discussed maintaining a debt service ratio of 1.2 or better. He stated that based on this, any planning or designing for next phase should begin in the 2022-2023 academic year, when debt repayment is complete. If sooner, arrangements with TD Bank would need to be discussed. Ryan also gave a verbal report on the TD Bank account change over and described everything is proceeding as planned.

Dr. Sonia Pope brought an email she received from SABIS Human Resources to the Board. The email was regarding the employer coverage cost of the employee health plan for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020. Mahdi Kansou stated he would investigate this further with SABIS HR to get a better understanding of this information. The board will revisit this, if necessary, at a later date.

SABIS Academic Plan

Mahdi Kansou presented the board with a plan to introduce tablets and e-books to the students, first piloting them in one or two grade levels to make a smooth transition. He told the board that there needs to be further discussion about ownership, allowing students to bring the tablets home, and internet connectivity. Ryan stated that the 5-year financial projections included deployment of e-books. The board discussed the possible benefits and challenges of using tablets and e-books.

Mahdi reported that Dr. Lynn Spampinato will provide a presentation for the board to outline in more detail the academic plan for the school. The presentation will be given at a later date.

Expansion Planning

The board discussed possible scenarios for expansion and the academic needs of the community along with the school's historic attempts at expansion. The board requested

that Dr. Sonia Pope make an attempt to collect data about high school and college outcomes for HCCS graduates. Mahdi presented the board with a brief overview of the SABIS high school program. The board agreed to continue thinking about this and discuss further at a future meeting.

Facilities Planning

Tom Paquin presented the possibility of building a gymnasium using a Butler Building, a metal pre-fab building option that costs approximately \$80-\$100/square foot which would total between \$1-3 million. The board discussed the benefits of a new gymnasium in terms of attracting prospective parents and giving middle school students further experience in organized sports. Mahdi Kansou and Ryan Meek offered alternative suggestions of having steel beams in the current gym removed or building a brick and mortar building with a smaller foundation than the plans discussed last year. The board requested that Tom Paquin work on getting quotes/estimates for these possibilities.

Kyle Callender presented to the board regarding the Safety and Security Plan. He reported the school has formed a School Safety and Security Professional Learning Community (PLC) through a Title IV grant that is using federal tools to revise the current emergency operations manual. This team is comparing Crisis Management Plan applications for mobile devices to determine effectiveness and affordability. The app would centralize all of the school's current safety and security plan pieces and potentially allow teachers and parents to access real-time safety updates.

Brainstorming: Improvements and standing-out in our community

The board agreed this agenda item had been adequately addressed through the previous discussions of the day.

VI. School Staffing for Academic Year 2019-2020

The board discussed recruitment and retention strategies for teachers for the upcoming academic year. Dr. Pope reported that the school has experienced the most difficulty in math and in Special Education. The board also discussed the importance of complying with the Equal Pay Act. Benjamin Torres reported to the board that lack of highly qualified candidates and salary competition were challenges he faced while hiring in summer 2018. The board requested that SABIS conduct another compensation evaluation to review salaries, especially in these two subject matters.

Cynthia Dennis moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Leona Florek. The meeting adjourned at 3:22 p.m.

As prepared by Elizabeth Pawlowski

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Lubold, Clerk
Holyoke Community Charter School Board of Trustees

MEETING ATTACHMENTS

N/A