



## **MINUTES**

### **Full Board of Directors Meeting**

**April 24, 2023**  
**6:15 pm**

**The meeting was held virtually via Zoom using this [link](#)**

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**MISSION:** We exist to foster a diverse and equitable community of youth and adults striving together for academic, personal and civic excellence.

**VISION:** Inclusive excellence in public education.

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The Board uses a series of qualifiers, where appropriate, to help clarify the nature of each presentation/report.

1. The decision has been made and updates are provided (Inform)
2. Input is needed to assist the board to make the best decision (Discussion/Input)
3. Brainstorming is needed to help identify all options (Brainstorm)
4. Input and/or decision is assigned to a Special Committee (Small Group)
5. The decision is ready for vote (Vote)

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Board Executive Committee:**

Joe Whitfield, Chair  
Stephanie Grossman, Vice Chair  
Marc Furton, Treasurer  
Anna Rogers, Secretary

### **Board Members:**

Annie Bielecki, Board Member  
Kamrin Coffey, Board Member  
Drew Goltermann, Board Member  
Gwen Maurello, Board Member  
Grace Nailing, Board Member  
Meg Ramey, Education First  
Kenny Smith, Board Member  
Ambar Suero, Board Member

### **Highline Ex-Officio Members:**

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director  
Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal  
Vanessa Rodriguez, Highline Academy Northeast Principal  
Brittany Joyce, Highline Director of Strategy and Communications  
Manda Troutman, Outreach and Communications Manager  
Michael Rodriguez, HANE Teacher  
Erika Paulino, HASE Front Office Manager  
Evette Green, HASE Teacher

### **Other:**

Nikea Bland, HASE Parent  
Tabitha Cardin, HANE Teacher  
Alli Williams, HASE Teacher  
Kym Anderson, HANE Teacher  
Jamie Goode, HANE Staff  
[Jeff Wallerstedt](#), HASE Parent

### **Absent:**

Austin Young, HANE Teacher

| <i>Topic</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <i>Presenter</i> | <i>Goals</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Call to Order – Joe Whitfield – Call to Order (6:18 pm)</b><br>Quorum Establish<br>A quorum of the Board was established. The agenda was adopted with no changes.<br><br>Mission Moment<br>Anna Rogers read aloud the mission and vision statement. Anna shared that when she hears the mission and vision, it reminds her and her family why they chose to send their children to Highline. She believes being able to grow up in a school that is rich in diversity with a range of backgrounds is going to set them up for success in their adult life. Knowing that there are people who look and sound different than themselves will help them develop their social and communication skills. Anna spoke about her personal experience not being from the US and how embracing different cultures is foundational for the health and growth of our society. Highline performs well academically, which is important, and she is convinced that developing the whole child in a diverse environment is also critical.<br><br>Highline is a Proud DPS Charter School                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                  |              |                |
| <b>Consent Agenda – Joe Whitfield – Governance – Vote (6:21 pm)</b><br>Minutes from the March 20, 2023 meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A motion was made by Joe Whitfield and seconded by Annie Bielecki to approve the March 20, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.</li> </ul> 2023-24 Board Meeting Calendar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A motion was made by Joe Whitfield and seconded by Kamrin Coffey to approve the 2023-24 Board meeting calendar. The motion passed unanimously.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                  |              |                |
| <b>See BOD Packet for:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Campus Safety Presentation</li> <li>March 2023 Budget to Actuals</li> <li>Highline Academy existing salary scale + 6% increase + added lanes document</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                  |              |                |
| <b>Public Comment (6:25 pm)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                  |              |                |
| <b>E.D. Update - Chris Ferris - Inform (6:25 pm)</b><br>Highline Safety Policy & Protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris Ferris shared an overview of campus safety protocols adhered to at both campuses. The overview in full can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>Highline staff are trained by the Denver School Safety Officers to perform lock down and lock out drills.</li> <li>Stephanie Grossman asked why the Board has not reviewed safety protocols within recent years. Chris Ferris explained that no one has asked, and that safety is ingrained into the day-to-day operations of the school. Chris offered to add this topic to the annual calendar going forward for the Board of Directors to review.</li> <li>Stephanie Grossman shared that not all of the safety protocols are followed during campus events (i.e. propping doors open). Chris Ferris explained after-hours public events follow a slightly different protocol. This includes the approval of having doors propped open. Chris offered to follow up with campus leaders on adherence to safety protocols during school-day campus events.</li> <li>Joe Whitfield asked about internal assessments. Chris Ferris explained that all psychologists and social workers are trained for internal threat assessments as part of our Bullying Prevention grant. Highline conducts an annual survey with students to determine if they have experienced or witnessed bullying at</li> </ul> |                  |              |                |

school.

- Annie Bielecki asked if there is any way to gauge the comfort levels of staff regarding the safety protocols. Is there a metric to capture this? Chris Ferris said we have not conducted a survey to understand how staff are feeling. Anxiety naturally rises after an event, and eases after.
- Vanessa Rodriguez shared that HANE staff feel very safe due to being in a new DPS building and after receiving high remarks from DPS for safety drills and assessments. HANE has a partnership with Roudna and response times have been very positive.
- Sarah Verni-Lau shared that HASE staff ask questions and advocate for themselves and their students. The Admin team is proactive and addresses questions as they arise. There are structured times for drills, and as questions/concerns surface, the Admin team endeavors to communicate quickly and be responsive.
- Ambar Suero shared that conversations about safety are serious and that this is not a new issue. She would like to bring this conversation back to the equity lens. Ambar shared that there are many conversations rooted in policy which criminalize our Black and brown students. Removing and bringing back School Resource Officers (SROs) is and is not the right way to go. She shared that the District is circulating a survey to families to understand their concerns and what they would like to see changed regarding safety. Ambar suggested that we review these results to glean best practices on how to be proactive and make positive changes.
- Joe Whitfield asked if there is something we can do as a Board to be more proactive on this issue. Chris Ferris shared that initiating an annual update is a good place to start. She would like to help discover the root of problems before they escalate to the point of violence.
- Stephanie Grossman asked if the Board can develop a safety committee. Chris Ferris shared that the Board can form any committee that they deem necessary. Kenny Smith shared that there are other ways to address transparency and communication on safety beyond a Board-led committee. Drew Goltermann agreed.
- Gwen Maurello shared that perhaps we share the safety plans with families at the start of the school year. She wanted to ensure everyone is aware that Highline's safety plans have been established and refined over the years, and the plans are routine. Many of the protocols and procedures are set at the State or District level, and Highline adheres to them. The school is intentional on leading safety training for staff annually.

#### 2023 Summer School Programs

- A summer school program will not be held at HASE this year due to the construction project.
- A summer school program at HANE will be held for 3 weeks and will be a full-day camp with an art focus. About 30-40 students have registered so far.

#### DPS Rezoning

- DPS is discussing setting boundaries for schools and creating enrollment zones. Previously, schools had a boundary and students would be assigned to schools within their boundary. HANE is in an enrollment zone with 3 other elementary schools.
- This is one of the District's ideas for solving the issue with low enrollment and reducing transportation barriers. This would not be favorable - it would dismantle choice for families. As a Highline community, we may choose to go to a DPS Board meeting to share our concerns during public comment.
- This would not impact HASE, as this campus is not in an enrollment zone.
- Ambar Suero shared the District is doing to a second read on this.

### **Principal Update - Sarah Verni-Lau & Vanessa Rodriguez - Inform (7:02 pm)**

#### How Highline Prepared for CMAS

##### HANE

- Vanessa Rodriguez reviewed details on how the campuses prepared for CMAS in [this](#) presentation.
- Teachers took the practice CMAS test, which is a best practice that HASE has been doing for years. This allowed them to determine test taking strategies that best set students up for success, and which material they needed to review more with students. They were then able to assess how and when to implement these strategies with students.
- The Wellness Team supported students with mindfulness around test taking and to share techniques to help students feel comfortable and confident.
- All students will receive a pizza party and a dress down day as a part of incentives developed to motivate students and to encourage them to employ best practice test taking strategies.

##### HASE

- Sarah Veri-Lau reviewed the CMAS incentive plan [here](#), which HASE launched in 2019. We desire for the test results to be reflective of what students know and can do; not their test taking ability.
- Small incentives are given daily. There are individual and grade-level incentives to help inspire students and foster buy-in independently and among the collective.

### **Building Corporation - Chris Ferris and Jeff Wallerstedt - Inform (7:13 pm)**

#### Construction Updates

- Jeff is a HASE parent and joined the Building Corporation Committee this year. He has been a valued member of the team, asking thoughtful questions and supporting the facility expansion project. He has offered to share quarterly updates back to the full Board with the project commencing.
- Jeff shared the schedule for the expansion project, which can be viewed [here](#).
- Red items identify critical path projects. If these activities slip, it will delay the completion of the project.
- Blue items are non-critical and can be re-sequenced.
- Farrington's trailer will be mobilized in the next few days.
- A fire exit needed to be added to a middle school classroom to provide an egress door due to construction blocking an existing exit.

### **Finance Committee - Marc Furton - Inform (7:24 pm)**

#### March 2023 Budget to Actuals

- The \$100k Daniels Foundation Grant is not included in the budget yet.
- The \$29k facilities grant will come at the higher end starting next year.
- Revenue is in line with budget projections.
- The majority of expenses are in line with budget projections, however HANE is not quite due to a larger amount of staff stipends.
- We expect to end the year with a surplus at both campuses (\$70k for HASE and \$270K for HANE).

#### 2023-24 Teacher Payscales

- The teacher payscale document can be accessed [here](#).
- Currently the scale starts with BA+15 and BA+30 and teachers requested scale that is less steep.
- Additionally, there are teachers who do not have master degrees, making it more difficult for these staff to advance into the higher lanes.
- The salary scale committee introduced additional brackets to promote longevity/tenure at Highline with the MA+8 years lane. Since HANE has only been in existence for 9 years, the committee made the decision to reduce the initial MA+ year requirement down from 10 years.
- Next year's budget was reviewed by the Finance Committee, which includes structural changes and the percentage increases.
- Professional credits are awarded to teachers for participating in professional development.
- Four teachers from each campus formed the salary scale committee to ensure there was teacher voice and input in developing a new scale.

- It is unknown how close this salary range is to DPS salary, but this scale gets us closer. As a smaller school we don't have the opportunity to match DPS. However, we are very close with other Charter schools. In addition, we are not locked into the contracts and they can be negotiated.
- A motion was made by Marc Furton and seconded by Drew Goltermann to approve the teacher salary scale for the 2023-24 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

#### 2023-24 School Budget

- The 2023-24 budget is located [here](#).
- COVID funding will stop in 2025 and we can see the impact on the budget.
- The proposed teacher salary increase is reflected in the budget.
- The budget is based on an 8% PPR increase for 2024 and 4% for 2025 and 2026. This is consistent with projections and historical trends.
- We have a small surplus at HANE in future years and a deficit at HASE.
- We can also see an increase in student population at HASE due to the building project. We budgeted 45 more students conservatively, the number likely could be higher.
- Numbers are not final and revenues can go up due to grants received.
- If a deficit continues, the Principals at both campuses are ready to make some cuts to make the budget neutral.
- There is some uncertainty in the 2023-24 PPR revenue; notably there is a possibility that PPR will go up to 10.2% as shared by the Colorado League of Charter Schools. If this increase takes effect, we would like to raise TA salaries, as we only worked on increasing the salary scale for teachers.
- A motion was made by Marc Furton and seconded by Joe Whitfield to approve the budget for the 2023-24 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

#### EOY Staff Bonus Discussion

- Due to the large amount of funds in reserves, we have the opportunity to give out bonuses for all staff. This can help compensate for lower salaries.
- This would support Highline's competitiveness and increase staff morale.
- The Finance Committee is proposing a \$1,000 end of year bonus in support of teacher and staff appreciation. A motion was made by Joe Whitfield and seconded by Mark Furton to approve a \$1,000 bonus for staff to be paid out in June 2023. The motion passed unanimously.

#### DEI Committee - Chris Ferris - Inform (7:54 pm)

##### Recap of HASE Culturally Responsive Education Event

- Staff provided an incredible presentation. Seven teachers shared presentations on how they incorporate culturally responsive teaching into their daily curriculum. As an example, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is used to compare historical lessons with current day events. In addition, attendees participated in a culturally responsive art lesson and completed an art project.
- Unfortunately, there were very few families in attendance. Only 3 parents attended (there was a basketball game happening on the same night that the planning committee was unaware about).
- The planning committee held a debriefing session and brainstormed ideas on how to improve family attendance and engagement next year.

#### Old Business - Chris Ferris - Inform (7:58 pm)

- None.

#### Reminders/Announcements – Brittany Joyce – Inform (7:59 pm)

- HASE groundbreaking event Tues. April 25 from 1:30 - 3:15 pm
- School Safety Listening Session: Thurs. April 27 at HANE from 6-7pm
- Teacher Appreciation efforts due April 28th to Brittany
- HANE Culture Fair Fri. May 12 from 4:30 - 7:00 pm
- Next BOD meeting: Mon. May 22 at 6:15 pm @HANE & [here via Zoom](#)

**Adjournment – Joe Whitfield – Adjourn Meeting – Vote (8:02 pm)**

With no further business up for discussion, a motion was made by Joe Whitfield and seconded by Annie Bielecki to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.