



MINUTES

Full Board of Directors Meeting

October 23, 2023

6:15 pm

The meeting was held in person at HASE and via Zoom using this [link](#)

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.

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 (virtual)
Annie Bielecki, Secretary
Drew Goltermann, Co-Treasurer
Marc Fulton, Co-Treasurer

Board Members:

Kamrin Coffey, Board Member
Grace Nailing, Board Member
Ambar Suero, Board Member
Nikea Bland, Board Member
Katherine Casey, Board Member
Kamrin Coffey, Board Member
Kaylee Hart, Board Member
Kenny Smith, Board Member (virtual)
Meg Ramey, Board Member (virtual)

Highline Ex-Officio Members:

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director
Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal
Vanessa Rodriguez, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Manda Troutman, Outreach and Communications Manager
Austin Young, HANE Teacher
Erika Paulino, HASE Front Office Manager
Contessa Young, HANE Teacher
Nora Clar, HASE Flex Teacher
Abby Ariaga, Assistant Principal HANE
Michelle Farrell, Teacher(virtual)
Maya Balakier, (virtual)

Other:

Alli Williams (virtual)
Mrs. Havel/Nova (virtual)
Jamie Goode (virtual)
Michelle Farrell (virtual)
Allison Coss (virtual)
CJ Williams

Absent:

Kamrin Coffey, Board Member

Topic	Presenter	Goals	Outcome
Call to Order – Joe Whitfield – Call to Order (6:20 pm) Quorum Establish A quorum of the Board was established. The agenda was adopted with no changes. Mission Moment Kamrin is out but sent a statement read by Manda: <i>“To me, Highline Academy is more than just a school; it is a vibrant hub of learning, understanding, and acceptance. The mission's emphasis on diversity and equity signifies the school's dedication to embracing differences and celebrating unique perspectives. As a community member, this inclusivity means that every individual, regardless of their background, is not only welcomed but valued. It creates an atmosphere where learning is not confined to textbooks but is a holistic experience that includes cultural exchange, empathy, and mutual respect.</i> <i>The vision of creating inclusive excellence in public education speaks volumes about Highline Academy's ambition to set a standard for educational institutions. And as a community member with concerns about education in America, I'm inspired by Highline's commitment to educational excellence and emotional literacy. Highline Academy, to me, is a symbol of hope and progress. It symbolizes a future where education is not just a privilege for a select few but a fundamental right for every individual. It represents a community where everyone is empowered to learn, grow, and thrive, regardless of their background or circumstances.</i> <i>I am immensely proud to be a part of this journey and I am committed to upholding the values of diversity, equity, and excellence that Highline Academy stands for, and I am excited about the positive impact we can create together in the lives of our youth and in the broader community.”</i>			
Consent Agenda – Joe Whitfield – Governance – Vote (6:23 pm) Minutes from the September 25, 2023 meeting A motion was made by Joe and seconded by Annie to approve the September 25, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.			
See BOD Packet for: - UIPs- both complete and executive summaries for both schools - FAMLI Overview - Budget to Actuals - Audit for 22-23 - M.S. Option to Expand - Reach Out Presentation and donor outreach toolkit - Reach Up Presentation - Minutes from the September 25, 2023 Board Meeting			
Public Comment (6:24 pm) - Manda framed the public comment section- highlighting the transparency and accountability aspect of public comment. Comments are limited to 3 mins per speaker. - CJ Matthews - concerns about watching an R-rated movie in school. Concerns about discussion of			

Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Concerns about permission slips and field trips as pertains to student safety.

- Austin Young presents 3 comments:
 - Comment 1 - Concerns about HANE about teacher retention and allocation of resources. Concerns about using flex teachers to teach homeroom because homeroom teachers are not hired. Concerns about GT concentration considering the hiring difficulties. Suggests retention bonuses.
 - Comment 2 - Enthusiasm for the positive change at school, but wants to talk about teacher shortage. Urges a discussion of strategies to retain our teachers. Would like to prioritize the needs of our current students before expanding to a MS. Would like to see the ILT re-evaluated.
 - Comment 3 - COVID leave at school- no choice but to use PTO for 5 days. Please reconsider the current policy. This was an anonymous comment on behalf of multiple staff members.
- Mrs. Havel
 - FAMLI - would like to know what her options are for this. Doesn't understand how Highline can opt out of this program. Maternity leave is quickly approaching and she would like to see and hear what the board says about this.

Reach UP - Katherine Casey and Chris Ferris (6:35 pm)

- Discussing how to project academic outcomes at HASE and HANE, walking through SPF results, which is a thin but important part of the school community.
- Chris gave an overview of the SPF scoring guide. Joe asked if there's weight given to growth/achievement, Chris answered 60/40.
- HASE spf - Green for performance. Elementary is "meets", Middle school is "exceeds". Opportunities for improvement in elementary for Free and reduced lunch, MLE learners, and students of color.
- HASE UIP - Shared the challenges, root causes, and plan. Chris shared Targets for 23-24 and 24-25 school year regarding the challenges- early literacy gaps, social emotional support, and achievement for MLL.
- A motion was made by Kaylee and seconded by Nikea to approve the HASE UIP. The motion passed unanimously.
- HANE spf - Orange - Priority Improvement. Root Causes- class sizes, lack of strong intervention program. MLE program is very strong, but all other parameters need work.
- HANE UIP - Challenges-literacy, Math, Early Literacy Growth. Universal strategies will be implemented to tackle the problems throughout the school, instead of targeting specific subgroups of students. Nikea asked for a more in depth explanation of high-dosage tutoring- no more than 4 students per session. It's called Intervention in HANE. Staffing continues to be a large problem in trying to implement these tutoring strategies. Grace asked if there are check-ins and touchpoints for how the staff is feeling - 30/60/90 check ins. Vanessa does surveys around staff happiness and says that the main problem is salaries, class sizes. COVID leave and insurance issues are also making staff unhappy. Staff is generally happy with the culture and the supportive administrative team. Joe asked how the hiring is going. Vanessa answered that the positions are posted and they are doing what they can. 3 teachers at HANE resigned last week. Joe asked about the cap - Vanessa answered that the cap is 35 students per class. Vanessa pointed out the difference in class size between HASE and HANE and mentioned it as a big reason the schools fare so differently. Chris mentioned that stipends are being given for the staff that is going above and beyond. Katherine mentioned that much of this is outside our control- affordability issues in the city, necessity of taking in all students, etc. Suggests the Board needs to look at this through a structural lens.
- Annie moved and Joe seconded to approve the HANE UIP. The motion passed unanimously.
- Accountability Clock- with the 2023 results, HANE is currently at Year 3 of the clock. Chris gave an overview of what happens if HANE stays on priority improvement or moves up in the SPF score. We will be getting walkthroughs from the State with suggestions for improvement, and will also be getting additional funding starting next year.
- Katherine shared that Bellweather is suggesting mid-year checkpoints. suggests that at these intervals, we review progress and challenges, hear opportunities for Board support, and identify proactive Board actions.

E.D. Update - Chris Ferris - Inform (7:06 pm)

- HANE MS update
 - DPS proposal - shifting grade levels starting in 2025-26, adding MS grades and slowly shrinking elementary enrollment over a 5 year period.

- o DPS is now saying that they cannot propose this until after the election- so spring or next summer.
- o Conditions for proceeding are - a new DPS elementary school in the area, fundraising for additional capacity, improved CMAS and SPF performance at HANE, DPS board approval.

Finance Committee - Marc Furton and Chris Ferris - Vote (7:12 pm)

- Oct enrollment targets
 - o HASE Oct Count 533(4) over by 5
 - o HANE Oct Count 515 over by 12
- Budget to Actuals- Oct Count Update - slightly under 25% revenue due to grant funding not coming in yet. PPR funding will be slightly higher due to the Oct count. HANE is slightly over budget on consulting services. 2 SPED teachers are under consulting rather than teacher salary as they are working for us through an agency. HASE is slightly over due to insurance premiums. Cafeteria tables were supposed to be in last year's budget but are instead in this budget.
- Audit Report - We are required to hire an auditor and submit to DPS. We received a clean audit opinion. The Capitol Assets account has lots of activity due to construction project. Long Term Debt is also active- we paid off bonds from 2018. Pension liability - looks high due to COVID and such. Marc pointed out our amortization schedule and financial covenants. Marc pointed to page 70 of the audit to show balances of each campus's funds. Marc shared the letter we got from the auditor - in general it was a very clean audit, with only one corrected misstatement.
- Marc made a motion to approve the 2022/23 audit, seconded by Drew. The motion passed unanimously.
- FAMLI Update - Highline opted out last year due to lack of accessible benefits. We can opt in if we want. Or employees can opt in singularly. Downside for employees is that it is not good for unexpected leave. Last year staff said they did NOT want anything more deducted from their paycheck and opted for the individual opt-in option. The Board will revisit this in December and in the meantime is asking for some education of staff and surveying of staff as to what they want.
- Update re health insurance - Chris is aware of the unpopularity of the current plan. She and Luis have put together a committee to discuss changes, both short term and long term, including changing policies mid-year, or creating an HRA to provide some financial relief for people who have been inconvenienced by this plan. Chris is talking to a broker about potentially merging with other charter schools for better options.

Building Corporation - Chris Ferris - Inform (7:38 pm)

- Building is projected to be done by July 1. Meeting with the insurance company about a refund of 200k for the cost of the delay. Landscaper/contractor/insurance company are working out liability. Steel is going up at the site in a couple of weeks. Drew asked about backup options if it is not complete for the start of the 24-25 school year and Chris is still making contingency plans.

REACH Out Committee - Manda Troutman - Inform (7:40 pm)

- Colorado Gives Day
- Board Commitments and Donor Toolkit (**homework assignment with Board buddies**)
- Highline Hustle at HASE was a great success
- Harvest Fest at HANE also a great success
- Harvest Fest at HASE will be October 28
- Party Planning Committee - looking for HASE representatives. Annie requested that HASE board members reach out to their network to try to recruit some potential committee members.

REACH In - Executive Session - Joe Whitfield - Inform (7:45 pm)

- Joe motioned and Grace seconded a motion to enter into an executive session. The motion passed unanimously.
- CRS 24-6-402(4)(b), conferences with an attorney for receiving legal advice on specific legal questions. To update the board re pending legal matters, CRS 24-6-402(4)(h) discussing various matters involving individual students or parent concerns, some of which may have legal aspects.

- There was no vote for the Board to take coming out of executive session.

Old Business - Chris Ferris - Inform (8:23 pm)

- None

Reminders/Announcements - Annie Bielecki - Inform (8:24 pm)

- Fall Festival: Saturday, October 28 at 11:00 a.m. - HASE Campus
- REACH In: Thursday, November 9 at 12:00 p.m. - [Virtual](#)
- REACH Out: Tuesday, November 15 at 5:30 p.m. - [Virtual](#)
- DEI:
- Finance Cmte: Thursday, November 30 at 12:00 p.m. - [Virtual](#)
- REACH Up: Thursday, November 30th at 5:30 p.m. - [Virtual](#)
- Next BOD meeting: Monday, December 11 at 8:30 a.m. at HANE and [here via Zoom](#)

Adjournment - Joe Whitfield - Adjourn Meeting - Vote (8:25 pm)

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