



MINUTES

Full Board of Directors Meeting

January 24, 2022
6:15pm

The meeting was held:

[Online via Zoom using this link](#)

Dial-in Number: 16699006833,,87846964585#

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:

Brent Baribeau, Board President
Gwen Maurello, Co-Chair
Joe Whitfield, Co-Chair
Marc Furton, Treasurer
Anna Rogers, Secretary

Board Members:

Kamrin Coffey, Board Member
Ben Garey, Board Member
Stephanie Grossman, Board Member
Brandon Hellwig, Board Member
Drew Kent, Board Member
Grace Nailing, Board Member
Kenny Smith, Board Member

Highline Ex-Officio Members:

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director
Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal
Brittany Joyce, Highline Director of Communications
Teresa Fraiser, HR Director
Heather Knight, Project Manager
Erika Paulino, HASE Office Manager
Heather Miles, Southeast Campus Teacher
Leah Gerig, Northeast Campus Teacher

Other:

Leah Michal Dillard, HASE Teacher

Absent:

Guerin Gray, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Austin Young, Northeast Campus Teacher

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Call to Order – Brent Baribeau – Call to Order (6:19 pm) • Quorum Establish • Agenda Confirm • Mission and Vision restated A quorum of the Board was established. The agenda was adopted with no changes. Gwen Maurello read aloud the mission and vision statement. Striving for excellence is what stands out for her. This year in particular we have had a very strong presence on this throughout our community for academic, personal and civic excellence.			
Consent Agenda – Brent Baribeau – Governance – Vote (6:21 pm) • December 3, 2021 Board Minutes A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Joe Whitfield to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.			
See BOD Packet for: (6:21 pm) • HR Director Update • Principal update materials on anti-racism work • REACH Up Report and STAR data • December 2021 Financials • Building Corporation presentation			
Public Comment (6:22 pm) There was no public comment.			
Principal Update - Guerin Gray and Sarah Verni-Lau- Inform (6:22 pm) Update on campus anti-racism work • Leah-Michael Dillard, 7th grade ELA teacher at the Southeast campus, presented an update on anti-racism work happening this year. • The 7th grade language arts curriculum lends itself to looking at social injustice in many contexts. • This month they are examining two books - <i>Stamped</i> and a nonfiction text to understand why our work must be culturally responsive. They have also read <i>The Hate You Give</i>, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, and other texts that have been on banned reading lists due to their diverse content. • We strive to actively work to understand what racism is and what does it mean to be anti-racist. We believe this is an ongoing journey and that we must never settle. • Judge Joe Whitfield, also Highline's Vice-Chair on the Board, has visited with students many times within the past 2 years to speak about the justice system and how it impacts people of color. • Students have created a rubric to use as they read books to see how culturally responsive they are. They also consider books written in the past and if they should still be included in the teaching curriculum or canon. • Students ask 'how did we get here?' by exploring our past and how this has shaped our society in the present day. • Also ask what role we have in changing representation in our media, government, economics, education, healthcare and more. • Leah-Michael offered to bring in Board members to her opening lesson of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> to get a sense of what this content and curriculum looks like in action. • Board member Kenny Smith asked how students are interacting. Leah said she actively works to not intervene so that it is truly student-led discourse. • The book <i>All American Boys</i> is another one of their studied texts. At the end of the book, one of her students said 'Ms., this is an allegory for the George Floyd case and the other events we have witnessed recently.' • They follow the TQE model - Thoughts, Questions and Epiphanies - as the model for analyzing and reflecting on texts.			

- Many students are taking their discoveries from the classroom beyond Highline and advancing the conversation about reconciling our past and how we can create change for our future.
- Leah-Michael is grateful to be in a school where what is identified as being best for kids to advance student thinking and be culturally responsive is embraced and encouraged.

Update on COVID impacts

- Sarah Verni-Lau shared that there are 3 in-house subs and they are covering multiple staff absences each day. The first week back from winter break was hard, as 10 staff members were out.
- Leveraging TA's and the Admin team is also filling in to be in the classroom.
- Student absences are much higher this year. It is an added burden for teachers who desire to support students who are at home and want to make sure they are mastering the skills they are teaching in whatever way they are able to learn right now.

Executive Director Update - Chris Ferris & Teresa Frasier - Inform (6:51 pm)

Update on HASE renewal

- Our Southeast campus was approved for a 5-year charter renewal by the DPS Board of Directors on January 13, 2022. This is a testament to the incredible dedication of our community and the results generated by our high-performing program. Senior leaders at DPS shared high marks about our program in their report.
- There has been discussion to close small schools in DPS. Charter leaders said they would participate in this process to ensure it is collaborative. This effort has been well received by the DPS Superintendent and DPS Board members.
- Our Northeast campus is up for renewal next school year. We have shown progress in our academics and there is strong support for HANE within our community.
- Brent Baribeau explained that Chris's leadership in representing Highline outside of the organization has been remarkable. They believe her work in uniting charters, working collaboratively and advocating for charter schools who are delivering high outcomes was instrumental in the charter renewal vote that came out from the DPS Board.
- Kenny Smith asked what is the impact on staff during a renewal year. The Admin team is proud and the report from DPS from the site visit captured all the work and dedication happening throughout the school. They were in the building for 8 hours and were able to see the complete picture of what Highline delivers for students. Erika Paulino said that having a 5-year renewal puts everyone at ease and focuses on what we are here to do: support students. The vote also increased staff morale. Heather Miles said the 5-year renewal was significant given the shift on the DPS Board and it was encouraging to be recognized for the incredible work we have been doing.

State of Education

- There has been a drastic shift in education within the past year. There has been dramatic turnover mid-year at an unprecedented rate unlike anything we have ever seen. Many schools across the country have had to go remote due to not having enough adults in the building to keep kids safe.
- It is a stressful situation when there are many staff out while we are attempting to maintain high teaching standards.

Staffing and retention update

- Across the Network, Highline's turnover rate is 9.77%. This equates to 16 staff members.
- Of this rate, 3.75% includes staff of color.
- Top reasons we are seeing staff leave:
 - Relocation to other states, with lower cost of living
 - Remote position options
 - Leaving teaching as a profession
- The teacher shortage is real and the impacts are being felt across the state and nation. There are 565 open positions in Colorado alone.
- It is also taking double the time to fill open positions (from 20 to 45 days)
- The school is working hard to retain staff, employing strategies such as:

- Retention bonuses in October 2021 and May 2022
- Weekly shoutouts/recognition
- Frequent feedback
- Stay interviews
- Making changes to the PTO policy for additional Covid days and allowing early access to emergency sick leave bank per staff feedback
- At HASE, there has been a noticeable loss of Black staff since 2019. Retention rates for other staff of color have remained fairly consistent.
- At HANE, retention for Hispanic staff has grown steadily from 2019 (from 14 - 20%). Retention rates among other ethnic groups have experienced gradual declines.

Staff Insight survey results

- The survey was administered for teachers only in October 2021. October and February are two tough months in education. We did see declines in some areas that if the survey had been given in the typical December timeframe, we may have seen more favorable responses. It is a time intensive survey with 120 questions spread over 17 categories.
- HASE Highlights
 - 83% of teachers completed the survey, inline with last year's completion rate.
 - There was growth from 2020-21 in the categories of: Academic Opportunity, Family & Community Engagement, DEI, and Hiring/Onboarding.
 - Areas for growth include: retaining teachers and leaders of color, creating sustainable workloads, creating opportunities for advancement.
- HANE Highlights
 - 82% of teachers completed the survey, which is a 10% increase from last year.
 - There was growth from 2020-21 in the categories of: Observation & Feedback, Family & Community Engagement, DEI, Hiring/Onboarding, and Observation & Feedback.
 - Areas for growth include: retaining teachers and leaders of color, implementing a rigorous academic curriculum, and being a good place to teach and learn.
- Erika Paulino said that it is hard recruiting staff of color in Denver where there is a lower percentage of people of color compared to other areas in the country.

Reach Up - Gwen Maurello - Inform (7:33 pm)

STAR Update

- Early Literacy K-2, Reading 3-8, and Math K-8 is assessed in the STAR assessment.
- Our academic goals are captured in our 5-Year Strategic Plan which is outlined [here](#).
- HANE Highlights
 - Black and Hispanic students scored below white students on the Reading and Math assessments.
 - The difference in the percent of hispanic students at or above 50 NCE compared to other students has decreased drastically.
 - In December 67% of White students scored above 50 NCE in math, and 58% in reading.
 - Reading growth was realized within all grade levels from August to December, with an average growth of 6.1 months. Over 50% of students meet or exceed expectations in all grades for reading according to DPS benchmarks.
 - Math growth was realized within all grade levels from August to December, with an average growth of 8.2 months.
 - All grades demonstrated 0.4 years of growth or more on average in both reading and math. We see the impact of the pandemic with learning loss and how teachers are working hard to support student growth, with impressive growth results after just halfway into the school year.
 - Interventions are running but continue to be short staffed due to the pandemic and quarantines.
- HASE Highlights

- Black and Hispanic students scored below White students on the Reading and Math assessments. In December 70% of White students scored above 50 NCE in math, and 66% in reading.
- Reading growth was realized within all grade levels from August to December, with an average growth of 5.4 months. Almost all grades for reading have more than 70% of students meeting or exceeding expectations.
- Math growth was realized within all grade levels from August to December, with an average growth of 9.7 months.
- The increase in the number of students at or above 50 NCE has increased among all subgroups, but is notably increasing more quickly for Black students demonstrating catch up growth.
- Most grades showed exceptional growth throughout the year, and particularly with many grade levels demonstrating an average of more than 1 year's growth already for the year.
- There are 3 main things Admin does with this data: determines who qualifies for intervention (bottom quartile); use the data to sort students for math centers and guided reading; students who are not in the bottom quartile are identified to help prevent them from slipping and keep them progressing.
- Heather Miles expressed that she has seen more value for the STAR assessment this year thanks to Sarah's leadership.

Finance - Marc Furton - Inform (8:00 pm)

December 2021 Financials

Final PPR numbers will be presented in the next meeting and seems will be higher than budgeted.

- Budget to Actuals was reviewed with the following areas highlighted:
 - Revenue: HASE is at 47% of the budgeted revenue, HANE is at 46% of the budgeted revenue.
 - We have donated \$5,000 to Marshall Fire victims. This was from unused state grant funds we received last year. The donation pays for social services. Highline did not expect to have left over funds from the grant and thought it would be a nice gesture to support our community.
 - Expenses: HASE is at 47% of the budgeted expenses, HANE is at 48% of the budgeted expenses.
 - We are currently expecting a slight surplus for both campuses. Financials continue to look very good.
 - Cash reserve and other financial metrics were reviewed.

Building Corporation - Heather Knight - Vote (8:05 pm)

Update on process to hire a General Contractor and complete design

- Ratio expanded the team and brought on someone from the DPS construction team who has vast experience.
- We might be able to afford more for the building vs. what was originally estimated (interior upgrade, HVAC).
- We have to sign the contract with Ratio Architects.
- We need to undergo a RFP to secure a General Contractor (Construction Manager / General Contractor (CM/GC)).
- We don't have to use the same contractors during the entire project; there are legal ways to break up the relationship if it doesn't go well.
- Now is a good time to bring the CM/GC to avoid costly overruns, supply chain issues, scheduling conflicts. Check and balance for the architects will be critical.
- The preliminary schedule is included and so far we are on track to start construction in October 2022 with a slated finish in September 2023. Spring 2022 deadlines are achievable.
- We also need a Financial Advisor (seeking a MSRB registered advisor, which is fee based and not commission based. The rate charged is not tied to the loan amount nor kickbacks from loan issuers).
- Type of Financing
 - Bonds
 - Bank loans
 - Impact Investing (will not cover the entire debt, however funds from foundations that provide

money with no interest).

- We are currently interviewing different financial advisors.
- We are also meeting with capital campaign consultants. They conduct feasibility studies, including researching our current donors for giving capacity. These consultants have to be fee based and not commission based.
- General components of a capital campaign:
 - Feasibility Study
 - Silent phase
 - Events - ground breaking, hard hat tours, ribbon cutting, etc.
 - Whole community involvement will be essential
- Highline seeks to raise \$1,000,000 through fundraising efforts to help offset some of the loan, which has been received as realistic by the campaign consultants interviewed.
- Estimated budgets were presented and broken down by school year.
- Permits and architect fees have to be paid before we can secure the loan. We would like to borrow against the reserves and then pay it back when we get the loan. The loan is expected to be funded in August 2022.
- Highline should make sure that the scope is accurate and does not include added services.
- Time is of the essence; we should expect delays in securing permits.
- A man-hour contract is preferable and includes the percentage of the construction services. Abandonment should be included (to be billed for earned value and not the entire cost of the project).
- The vote should be done in the Building Corporation sub-committee and then the Board will be informed on the contractors selected.
- It was proposed to split approval between three sub-committees:
 - Finance Committee: Oversee the selection and management of a financial advisor
 - Reach Out committee: Oversee the selection and management of a capital campaign consultant
 - Building Corporation: Oversee the selection and management of an architect and General Contractor

Brent Baribeau made a motion to empower the Building Corporation to enter into a contract with Ratio Architects and negotiate a contract with general contractors. Ben Gary seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Brent Baribeau made a motion to empower the finance committee to select and negotiate up to a contract for a financial advisor for the building expansion project at HASE. Ben Gary seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Brent Baribeau made a motion to empower the Reach Out committee to select and negotiate up to a contract for a capital campaign consultant. Ben Gary seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Brent Baribeau made a motion to allocate up to \$500,000 from the HASE reserve to the Building Corporation to cover the building expansion project expenses discussed during the meeting. Ben Gary seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Reach In - Brent Baribeau - Vote (8:44 pm)

Nomination to appoint Gwen Maurello as Board Chair

- Joe Whitfield made a motion to nominate Gwen Maurello as the Board Chair for Highline Academy's Board of Directors for the remainder of the 2021-22 school year. Ben Gary seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business - Brent Baribeau- Inform (8:49 pm)

None

Reminders/Announcements – Brent Baribeau – Inform (8:49 pm)

- Next BOD meeting: Friday, February 25, 2022
 - The HANE tour was canceled due to ongoing restrictions with the pandemic and a desire to support student safety.
 - In the interest of time, the Board will confirm via email when that meeting will be rescheduled (whether morning or evening).

Executive Session – Brent Baribeau – Vote (8:51 pm)

Brent Baribeau made a motion for the Board to move into Executive Session in accordance with CRS 24-6-402(40(f)) to discuss a personnel matter, specifically to discuss the mid-year evaluation of the Highline Academy Executive Director. Kamrin Coffey seconds. The motion passes unanimously.

After Board Comes out of Executive Session

Brent Baribeau made a motion for the Board to empower the Board President to begin contract negotiations with the Executive Director for the 2022-2023 school year. Drew Kent seconds. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment – Brent Baribeau – Adjourn Meeting – Vote (9:52 pm)

With no further business up for discussion, a motion was made by Gwen Maurello and seconded by Drew Kent to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.