



MINUTES

Full Board of Directors Meeting

**June 13, 2022
6:15 pm**

The meeting was held:

[Online via Zoom using this link](#)

Dial-in Number: +16699006833,,81434631896#

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:

Gwen Maurello, Board Chair
Joe Whitfield, Vice Chair
Marc Furton, Treasurer
Anna Rogers, Secretary

Board Members:

Brent Baribeau, Board Member
Kamrin Coffey, Board Member
Ben Garey, Board Member
Stephanie Grossman, Board Member
Drew Kent, Board Member
Grace Nailing, Board Member
Kenny Smith, Board Member

Highline Ex-Officio Members:

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director
Vanessa Rodriguez, Highline Academy Northeast Assistant Principal
Brittany Joyce, Highline Director of Communications
Teresa Fraiser, HR Director

Other:

Meg Ramey, Education First
Michael Romero, Southeast campus parent
Karen Ikegami, Executive Director of Rise Up Community Charter School

Absent:

Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal
Guerin Gray, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Brandon Hellwig, Board Member
Heather Knight, Project Manager
Austin Young, Northeast Campus Teacher
Heather Miles, Southeast Campus Teacher
Leah Gerig, Northeast Campus Teacher
Erika Paulino, Southeast Campus Office Manager

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Call to Order – Gwen Maurello – Call to Order (6:16 pm) • Quorum Establish • Agenda Confirm • Mission and Vision restated A quorum of the Board was established. The agenda was adopted with no changes. Members of the Board and Highline Leadership team introduced themselves in light of several guests joining the call for the evening. Joe Whitfield read aloud the mission and vision statement. Having another opportunity to read the mission has allowed him to reflect on what the school has accomplished over the last few years. What does it mean to have academic excellence when there are students learning online during a pandemic? What does it mean to celebrate diversity with students represented from across the world? At Highline we embrace that diversity and are intentional to develop culturally responsive curriculum. In reviewing the progress from year 1 of the strategic plan, it was invigorating to him to see our progress and he said we have done a remarkable job. He is honored to be a part of the Highline community.			
Consent Agenda – Gwen Maurello – Governance – Vote (6:24 pm) • Minutes from May 20, 2022 meeting A motion was made by Gwen Maurello and seconded by Joe Whitfield to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.			
See BOD Packet for: (6:25 pm) • Strategic Plan Year 1 Review • May 2022 Financials • CECFA Resolutions • EOY Reach Out Report & HASE Capital Campaign Update • 2022-23 Board candidate applications			
Public Comment (6:25 pm) Michael Romero, Southeast campus parent, is a transportation engineer and has drafted some potential improvements to the area surrounding Highline Academy Southeast to improve student and staff safety. Currently, he is not permitting his children to walk or bike to school given safety concerns. Mr. Romero has been in contact with the City of Denver through their Safe Routes to School program and has requested that the City consider Highline as a school of priority for their program. Currently, Highline is not classified as a priority because as a charter school it is assumed through the City's study that most students arrive to school by vehicle. Mr. Romero initiated the proposed engineering design and is hoping Highline's board will advocate for the plan. Mr. Romero believes Highline deserves being in an area of critical need for improved infrastructure. This is a concept based on Mr. Romero's perceived concerns, and we would like to request the Board's input. Mr. Romero is not familiar with any costs associated with the City to proceed, and is willing to volunteer his time to move this effort forward.			
Executive Director Update - Chris Ferris and Teresa Frasier - Inform (6:29 pm) Strategic Plan Year 1 Review Chris Ferris provided an overview of progress made toward the school's 2025 strategic plan after its first year in execution. The strategic plan has 4 overarching goals and an update on each goal is as follows: • Academic Excellence ○ There is less than 10% difference between our major subgroups on CMAS. 2021-22 CMAS data will not be available until August 2022. However, the school predicts that there will be more than a 10% gap at HASE, and maybe closer to a 10% gap at HANE. ○ 1.5 years of growth for students who are behind (STAR) - Using the new Innovare Data Dashboard, we can see that 47.8% of HANE students who started the year below grade level made more than 1 year's growth and 58.6% of them made more than a year's growth in Reading. This is a wonderful start toward the goal. ○ Students who are significantly below grade level are receiving academic supports - HASE met			

this goal with additional interventionists and a shrinking group of students below the 25% percentile. HANE Struggles to meet this goal with more staff turnover and a larger percentage of students at below the 25th percentile.

- Anti-Racist School

- Over the years the school has increased its Board diversity in an effort to mirror the demographics of its diverse student population. In the 2016-17 school year the school had 2 people of color on the Board The school has 5 members of color for the current 2021-22 school year.
- Efforts to connect with the Parents for DEI committee did not take off as planned to due meeting restrictions and COVID exhaustion.
- At HASE, DEI professional Development (PD) training centered around inclusion of students transitioning and anti-racist community time was differentiated by grade level. Teachers brought in new texts and novels to curriculum and community time to increase representation. Teachers and staff have listened to students' feedback on the impacts of adapting antiracist concepts throughout the day.
- AT HANE, PD on Trauma Informed Practice, Equity, Differentiation, and Family Engagement for choice groups was the focus. The ECE team hosted nutrition/cooking seminars for families that recognized a variety of cultures and customs.

- Ethical and Sustainable Organization

- Current retention for this year is at 71% Network wide. The Southeast campus has completed hiring for 22 23, and the Northeast campus has 10 open positions. Organization wide the turnover rate is 29% (40 people) with an average turnover rate of 2.4% (3 people) out of an organization wide total of 138 staff starting out at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year.
- 15% of staff left due to health reasons. Another 15% left for personal reasons not related to work.
- Several staff left the teaching profession entirely. More staff from HANE left after less than a year of tenure.
- Brent Baribeau asked if the school can begin tracking teachers who left for another school within the Denver Metro area. Teresa said this is doable.
- Joe Whitfield asked if we have an idea of how many of our staff will be staying past the summer. Teresa explained that all schools are attempting to lure teachers with competitive offers and bonuses, especially for hard to fill positions. Highline does this as well.
- Employees are looking for work that is closer to home and have noted this is an important factor. Staff who left also shared that ending the school year in June (we align with the DPS calendar) was a hardship.
- Kenny Smith asked how close we are to having our positions filled. HASE is fully staffed. There are 9 positions left to fill. Four of those 9 are hard to fill, and are special education roles. We are actively posting everywhere we can and asking our community to help us recruit as well.
- In a normal year, schools see an average of 25% turnover. While 29% is higher for Highline, this was actually better than most schools after a very difficult year in education.
- Retention of staff of color has remained steady as we look at the overall makeup of our current demographics. We are seeing more success in attracting candidates of color by utilizing more targeted platforms.
- For the first time we saw more candidates of color apply for the Northeast campus Principal position than white candidates. Four of the five candidates who interviewed at the committee level were women of color. The school posted on many diverse job boards, and the posting also noted our strategic plan and why diversity is paramount to our program.
- Gwen Maurello asked of the staff we lost, was it disproportionate by subgroup? Teresa said the number of staff of color we lost for the 2021-22 school year, we gained for the 2022-23 school year.

- One Highline

- Toward the objective of aligning the teacher evaluation system, leaders taught all staff what the expectations are for teacher evaluations across both campuses and led a PD cycle on it. The leadership team created more alignment between campuses on what it means to be effective. The campus Admin teams set up the structures and did much of the planning.
- A teaching coach observes the teacher teaching and meets with them after with specific areas to help

them improve. They lead with a 'lever' - one thing that the teacher can focus on now to improve their teaching methods for kids.

Reach Up - Chris Ferris - Inform (6:55 pm)

EOY Star Report

- Presented data from the Schoolzilla Dashboard that the school was just granted access to this month. Now the school is able to use this tool that updates data automatically in real time. Users are able to see performance by subgroup for reading and math, including filters of ethnicity, gender, performance band and grade level. Users are also able to compare performance YOY.
- For the Northeast campus, 58% of students are proficient in reading. 75 students will need 1:1 intervention next year (25th or lower percentile). 66% student growth in reading. Strong performance for the 2nd grade team in both proficiency and growth. In math, 65% of students are proficient.
- For the Southeast campus, 63% of students are proficient in reading, with 77% of students realizing growth. 70% of students are proficient in math, with 77% student growth. in math
- The Reach Up committee will share out academic data next year using Schoolzilla. It is a very intuitive platform that allows multiple ways to analyze the data.
- Kenny Smith said STAR data is great for progress monitoring student achievement, however CMAS measures different indicators and is not a direct correlation to performance.

Building Corporation - Chris Ferris - Vote (7:15 pm)

Bond Resolution

- During last week's meeting, we realized that the debt service numbers are higher than we initially projected in the fall of 2021. Our current debt service is \$525k a year. The current scope of the project (\$8M expansion project) the debt service would be \$1.1M annually.
- We have to make a decision tonight if we want the project to continue. The bonds are going through the process for approval and Farrington, the general contractor, needs to know if they can begin work on the project, and what size it is.
- There are 2 options. We can decrease the spending by scaling down the project or we can increase the program (number of students served). Chris's suggestion is to do both: do one floor (instead of 2) with extra classrooms and a community space with bathrooms and offices, and increase the size of the program.
- If we add 50 students, the school can add 3 teachers and still have a high quality program. This would entail adding science, social studies and a spanish teacher so that every grade level would have a dedicated teacher for each subject. This would require 5 additional classrooms and could result in up to 100 more students without harming the program
- The current annual debt service (ADS) is \$525,000. If we add 50 students, the ADS would be around \$837,000. If we add 100 students, the ADS would be about \$1,000,000. Adding 100 students is risky since it might not be feasible to enroll this higher number of students in the future in light of declining enrollment. The sweet spot is in the middle.
- This table came from our financial advisor, The Longhouse Group:

Scenario: (est. market rates as of June 8, 2022)	Annual DS based on \$8M Project Fund	Annual DS based on \$5M Project Fund	Approx. Change in Annual DS Per \$1M Change in Proj Fund
1: Current Rates, 25 Yr Maturity	\$1,100,000	\$891,000	\$70,000
2: Current Rates, 30 Yr Maturity	\$1,014,000	\$820,500	\$65,000
3: Current Rates, 35 Yr Maturity	\$ 955,000	\$773,000	\$60,000
4: Current Rates + 0.25%, 25 Yr Maturity	\$1,123,000	\$909,000	\$70,000
5: Current Rates + 0.25%, 30 Yr Maturity	\$1,035,000	\$837,000	\$65,000
6: Current Rates + 0.25%, 35 Yr Maturity	\$ 975,000	\$788,500	\$60,000

- Additionally, Farrington Construction (the general contractor) informed us that the project can not be built

for \$5,000,000, but it can be for \$6,000,000. If we go with \$5,000,000 the building will not be part of the whole school and will involve some sort of the walkway to connect with the main building.

- What is not included in these budget numbers is furniture, new carpet and technology. The budget also does not include the potential of securing a BEST grant to secure funding for safety and HVAC..
- Mark: Does the budget include fundraising revenue? No - fundraising revenue will cover furniture and technology needs and to do improvement of the current building.
- The current inflation report shows that interest rates are going to continue to go up and the terms on the bonds will be locked for 8 years. The school can restructure the debt, but it will be a different economic situation. We are considering options 4, 5 and 6 from the above table, and the cost will probably be higher due to the inflation. Proceeding with a new design might be more expensive since the school will have to pay Ratio (the architects) for additional design work.
- Ben thinks we should either go with a 2 story to have a good quality program with long term flexibility. The financial situation right now is not ideal and the debt service will be all over the place in the next 30 days.
- Gwen Maurello: Adding between 25 to 100 students will still include adding 5 classrooms and 3 teachers. Adding more students will be problematic, and the school will never have more than 100 students. Otherwise we will need to change the program.
- Ben: Do we have any teachers who do not have their own classroom? Chris: Yes, we have 4 teachers who do not have their own classroom.
- Brent: Do you think that we will have to pay \$8M for one story? Ben: Yes, we are paying the highest price right now due to financial volatility. How little a building can we build for the same money? Two stories might be more affordable, since the price per square footage is less expensive for a smaller footprint. Also, sub contractors will be less interested. We will be very tight on the ADS. The bond picture will change in the next 30 days.
- Is Farrington Construction contractually obligated to build under the amount they specified in the RFP? No, since the design is not completed. Farrington might honor the numbers, but because of the subcontractors and volatile market they might not be able to do this.
- Ben: I believe that the project might be feasible. But the debt service will be at the maximum. Cost will be very high per student. For the next 8 years you will have to sacrifice and opt in?? to put more students in the school. You might need 2 stories to justify the construction.
- Brent: We do not really need the 2nd story - the additional space that will be added for a 1 story expansion would be sufficient.
- Drew: DPS just voted against 3 charter schools. The sector is not charter friendly right now.
- Declining Enrollment is due to the declining birth level and people moving out of Denver. Realistically we need only 5 classrooms. Per Ben Garey, he thinks about the project in a 30 year term where we need to grow, maybe adding ECE. The school discovered that adding an ECE was beyond reach financially in the fall of 2021. Both options (adding one story or two stories) are financially not great right now.
- The decision we make today is to vote for the bonds. The general contractors need to know how much money they are working with for the project; either to redesign or start buying materials for a larger scale expansion.
- We are consistently \$100,000 more conservative in our budget. Moody states that we can afford this.
- Brent: I need justification. Why do we need 10 classrooms? It is a lot of money and it has to come from someplace. But then we need \$2,000,000 in reserves and we need to do something with this money.
- Chris: The biggest advantage to add a 2nd story is to add ECE. However, we then will need to have dedicated bathrooms, dedicated parking and a dedicated entrance for ECE.
- Ben: In absolute dollars, it seems that the choice is clear, but if you think about real money we should focus on the program and to maximize it for students. Marginal changes do not make a substantial difference, and we always have money left over from the budget.
- If we put everything into the building can the school provide raises next year? The pay scale is built into the budget. We need to keep in mind that the school budgeting can change.
- Gwen: What are we voting on tonight? Chris: We need a resolution that gives Chris and Gwen the ability to sign off on a bond (with parameters and set limits) as well as on the interest rate. Currently the total loan amount is \$17M (this is old and new debt). We will be voting on max dollars for the project and the max interest (as a range).

- Ben suggested we optimize for a 2 story building as long as the debt service remains under \$1,000,000 annually. Chris is concerned that the architects will not know what they are building. With all the changes in the market, Crist does not feel comfortable to make this decision. Ben said he still wants to proceed with the original project as long as we can get the debt service under \$1,000,000 annually.
- Joe Whitfield: There is a strategy behind optimization (long and short). Are all projections pointing to the same things, or should we look at something different? Maybe we can be more risky since we always have a strong waitlist. So maybe there is room to grow more. Moody rated the school as investment grade since the school always has money in the bank.
- Kamrin Coffey: She is curious to know what the school is most excited about. Her concern is that the school will grow too fast and may not be able to maintain its culture. She is in favor of quality over quantity; if this means adding more space to improve quality and teaching environments, she supports that.
- Chris: We can grow up to 100 students and just add 3 more teachers. Going above that threshold will change the program culture. At the beginning of Highline's founding, they had a bubble class since they were tight on funding.
- Drew Kent: Should we vote on the resolution or on the bond?
- Bonds are so volatile right now, so Ben would like to make a motion to pursue the original scope as long as the debt service is under \$1,000,000. If the prices are right, we do the original scope and if not we can go down to the \$5,000,000 scope or opt out completely.
- Ben Garey made a motion to authorize Chris Ferris and Gwen Maurello to enter into bonds up to a 35 year maturity and up to \$17,200,000 in debt with the goal of pursuing a \$8,000,000 expansion project for the Southeast Campus. Kenny Smith seconds the motion. Brent, Kamrin, Ben, Marc, Drew, Gwen, Grace, Anna, Kenny and Joe vote yes. The motion officially passes.
- Brent Baribeau: We have a large reserve, so we can go into a deficit for a couple of years. Originally, the reserve was built so Highline could open a 3rd campus. We got a good investment rating because of the reserve and it should be used strategically.
- Drew Kent: This is a risky decision.
- Since we have high Board turnover at the end of this school year (4 members are rolling off June 2022), this group should reconvene and have Highline members weigh in.

Finance - Marc Furton - Inform (8:51 pm)

May 2022 Budget to Actuals

- Network:
 - Revenue: PPR is slightly under budget. We will collect additional revenues before the end of the school year. There are also still some grant funds to collect.
 - Expense: About 2 points below our baseline for salaries. Savings on professional services. Expenses related to the
- HASE:
 - Revenue is 89% to budget.
 - Expenses are coming in at 83% to budget.
 - For FY 2022-23, the approved budget was \$7.20M and the working budget went up marginally to \$7.27M.
 - ESSR II Funds: Receiving \$390k over the next two years.
 - Increase in total expenses is largely driven by the increase in debt service for the facility expansion project (approved budget is \$6.99M and the working budget is \$7.44M).
- HANE:
 - Revenue is 88% to budget.
 - Expenses are coming in at 88% to budget.
 - Expenses for the Psych nurse and transportation came in higher than budget.
 - For FY 2023, the approved budget was \$8.1M and the working budget is up to \$8.3M.
 - ESSER II Funds: Receiving \$554,375 over the next two years. However, we will lose these federal funds after 2023-24 and we will need to keep an eye on this if enrollment remains flat.
 - Increase in SPED funds due to legislation passing to increase funding for the 2022-23 school year.
 - Increase in salaries: Bringing on 3 new ECE teachers for the new ECE classrooms being added;

additional flex teacher; interventionist; new salaries scales.

- Brent Baribeau: Does the 5 year budget include the additional 65 middle school students at HASE for the expansion? No, the budget was written for only 25 students.

Reach Out - Brittany Joyce - Inform (8:53 pm)

EOY Reach Out report

- Fundraising Goals & Results for 2021- 2022 year. We had 4 main fundraising goals for the year, as follows:
 1. HASE Facility Expansion: Goal - \$30,000, Amount Raised - \$47,751
 2. After school EnREACHment at HANE: Goal - \$15,000, Amount Raised - \$8,034
 3. ECE Support: Goal - \$50,000, Amount Raised - \$39,800
 4. Furthering DEI Education: Goal - \$30,000, Amount Raised - \$15,955

In terms of other fundraising results, they are mixed. The number of donors and the number of donations increased, yet the number of recurring donors did not change YOY (holding steady at 15). The average donation amount increased slightly however was below target. Individual giving is above the target and increased since last year, however matching gifts are below the target (though the amount increased YOY). The number of grants and grant funding decreased from last year and is below the target due to Highline's grant writer suffering from a serious illness at the start of 2022 remains in critical condition. CO Gives Day and the HASE online auction is above target.

- 2021 -22 Outreach Initiatives
 1. DPS Board Vote
 2. HASE Renewal
 3. Highline Scholarship

- Priorities for 2022-23

Fundraising

- Network: ECE Support - Goal: \$30,000, Furthering DEI Training & Learning - Goal: \$15,000
- HASE: Facility expansion project - Goal: \$250,000; Building-wide enhancements - New carpet, paint, furniture, electrical, HVAC, security system - Goal: \$30,000
- HANE: Increasing EnREACHment Access - Goal: \$10,000; Community Garden - Goal: \$3,000

2022-23 Outreach Priorities

- HASE Capital Campaign
- HANE Charter Renewal
- Engaging Alumni Families and Students
- Reconnecting with Former Board Members
- Engaging Local Businesses / Corporate Organizations

Capital Campaign Update

- Currently there is no interest among the parent community to support a capital campaign in support of the HASE facility expansion. We will revisit this at the beginning of the year once we determine the final go forward plan for the expansion.

Reach In Committee - Brent Baribeau - Vote (9:05 pm)

Board candidate nominations

2022-23 Board Officers

- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Joe Whitfield to appoint Gwen Maurello as the Highline Academy Board Chair for the 2022-23 school year. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Anna Rogers to appoint Joe Whitfield as the Highline Academy Board Vice Chair for the 2022-23 school year. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Drew Kent to appoint Marc Furton as the Highline Academy Board Treasurer for the 2022-23 school year. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Joe Whitfield to appoint Anna Rogers as the Highline Academy Board Secretary for the 2022-23 school year. The motion passed unanimously.

Gwen Maurello Term Renewal

- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Drew Kent to extend Gwen Maurello's term on the Highline Academy Board of Directors for 3 years. The motion passed unanimously.

Kenny Smith Term Renewal

- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Grace Nailing to extend Kenny Smith's term on the Highline Academy Board of Directors for 3 years. The motion passed unanimously.

2022-23 Board candidates

- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Gwen Maurello to appoint Andrew Goltermann to the Highline Academy Board of Directors for a 3 year term. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Kenny Smith to appoint Meg Ramey to the Highline Academy Board of Directors for a 3 year term. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Grace Nailing to appoint Ambar Suero to the Highline Academy Board of Directors for a 3 year term. The motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Joe Whitfield to appoint Annie Bielecki to the Highline Academy Board of Directors for a 3 year term. The motion passed unanimously.

2022-23 Board Calendar

- A motion was made by Gwen Maurello and seconded by Joe Whitfield to approve the 2022-23 Board calendar dates as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business - Chris Ferris - Inform (9:22 pm)

None

Reminders/Announcements – Gwen Maurello – Inform (9:23 pm)

- Next BOD meeting: Board retreat on July 29, 2022

Executive Session - Gwen Maurello - Vote (9:23 pm)

Executive Director EOY evaluation

Executive Director goals

Gwen Maurello made a motion for the Board to proceed to enter executive session for the discussion of the year end review of the Executive Director. Per statute C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(f), personnel matters are for confidential discussion during an executive session, unless the person(s) being discussed in a personnel matter request at this time that the discussion take place during the open meeting. Ben Garey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A motion was made by Ben Garey to empower Board Chair Gwen Maurello to update the contract with our Executive Director up to the parameters discussed in Executive session. The motion was seconded by Marc Furton. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment – Gwen Maurello – Adjourn Meeting – Vote (9:57 pm)

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