



MINUTES

Full Board of Directors' Meeting

**January 25, 2021
6:15pm**

The meeting was held:

[Online via Zoom using this link](#)

**Meeting ID: 728 5751 9879
Password: 9kpxrq**

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
Joe Whitfield, Board Vice President
Gina Schlieman, Secretary
Marc Furton, Treasurer

Board Members:

Ben Garey, Board Member
Gwen Maurello, Board Member
Brandon Hellwig, Board Member
Kenny Smith, Board Member
Drew Kent, Board Member
Anna Rogers, Board Member

Highline Ex-Officio Members:

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director
Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal
Guerin Gray, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Brittany Joyce, Highline Director of Communications
Teresa Fraiser, Highline HR Director
Leslie Branson, Highline Academy Northeast Teacher
Manda Troutman, Highline Academy Northeast Teacher
Erika Paulino, Highline Academy Southeast Office Manager
Kim Fronapfel, Highline Academy Southeast Teacher

Other:

Rachel Langberg, Highline Academy Northeast Assistant Principal
Marisol Martinez, Southeast Campus
Mike Smith, HASE Parent
Mesfin Aba, HASE Parent
Katie Romero, HASE Parent
Matthew Griebel

Absent:

n/a

<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 Quorum established. The agenda was adopted with no changes. Drew Kent read aloud the mission and vision statement. He said the mission highlights that every child and learning style matters. He explained that the school does everything possible to make sure each student receives a high quality education.			
Consent Agenda – Brent Baribeau – Governance – Vote (6:21 pm) • Minutes from the December 14, 2020 meeting 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: (6:22 pm) • Strategic Plan • Finance Budget to Actuals • Revised Budget 20-21			
Public Comment (6:23 pm) There was no public comment.			
Executive Director Update - Chris Ferris - Vote (6:23pm) Strategic Plan review and vote • The Executive Director (ED) presented PowerPoint presentation concerning the draft Strategic Plan. Shared word clouds showing feedback from staff and parents, and a unified goal statement with all four goals captured. • Reviewed the four main goals of the strategic plan; how we are already on the path to achieving those goals, and what we hope it will look like once the strategic plan is actualized in 2025. • There was more conversation around the language for the fund reserve, to remove any subjectivity. It was agreed to word it to state, “Highline will be financially stable and maintain a fund reserve of at least 30 days for all campuses.” • There was discussion around the goal for maintaining a healthy and diverse workforce and making sure the attrition rate is inline with what has been true to Highline, and also taking into account healthy attrition. Re-worded the bullet to state, “Highline will maintain a healthy and diverse workforce through a positive work environment and competitive compensation as measured by a 10% or lower voluntary teacher attrition rate, and increase in staff diversity to reach 45% of the total staff being people of color.” • A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Ben Garey to pass the 2025 strategic plan as constituted in the Board packet, with the slight revisions identified during the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Preschool/ECE Research • The ED has been doing some research on preschool for HASE in hopes that the strategic plan would be passed. • Why Early Childhood Education (ECE)? It provides a pipeline to Kindergarten enrollment, supports low income students, and is in high demand. • There are 3 model options: ○ Independent Preschool Center - potential for more revenue but added administrative responsibilities for billing and government reimbursements; no start-up fees provided ○ ECE program as part of DPS. Downside is that they only provide \$150k per classroom, which is not sufficient ○ Partner with Rocky Mountain ECE; however, would the Highline mission and core values remain intact?			

- Shared information about a building near the HASE campus on Holly street that was used as a school in the past. Pros and cons regarding this building were shared. Currently priced at \$1.3M, which is a low cost for the size of the facility. Some foundations have expressed interest in supporting the school with start-up costs. The building is in unincorporated Arapahoe, which means a separate charter would need to be formed. It is an older building, which may present hidden problems or repair needs. Is 7 classrooms too big? On the other hand it could provide some much-desired workspace for network staff. It was agreed that the ED and 2-3 board members would visit the Holly street location to provide further feedback about the facility's suitability.
- The vacated Schulhaus preschool facility across the street from HASE was reviewed, but the cost and proximity to a construction zone meant the building was not ideal.
- Question: If we have to create a separate 501(c)(3), would families zoned for HASE receive preferential treatment, in order to funnel into our K-8 program? Gina said we can set aside a certain number of seats as an advanced lottery process that can be negotiated as a part of the charter agreement. However, there is no process to guarantee enrollment if the ECE is set up as a separate organization.

Principal Update - Sarah Verni-Lau & Guerin Gray - Inform (7:27 pm)

Update on return to in-person learning

HANE - Guerin Gray, Principal

- ECE through 5th grade are now all in person, with 4th and 5th grade coming back today as the first day. Students were excited to see their teachers and friends. The campus did a roll-up approach so that students were brought back in grades at a time starting January 19th. The transition period appears to be faster now, with students getting back into the swing of school. Challenges involve wanting to have teachers vaccinated, and this is on hold due to the roll out plan by the state. ACCESS testing begins tomorrow morning, which is not ideal since students are just beginning to get into the routine of school. ACCESS testing is for any student whose first language is not English, which is ~40% of the HANE population. It is a series of tests that gauge reading, listing, writing, and talking.

HASE - Sarah Verni-Lau, Principal

- Kindergarten through 5th are all back in the building. Middle school will begin February 1st. Looking to put together a video as HANE did to set norms. Found that it is hard to staff groups of students into very small cohorts, so breaking students into manageable groups that are more sustainable. Parents have expressed interest to help out in the building when teachers need to take time off. These parents will remain with the same cohort all year and will serve as a 2nd adult for cohort grouping. We are basing our in-person plans based on data. As long as the number of positive COVID cases per 100,000 people in Denver County in the past 14 days remains below 500, we will remain in person.

Finance Committee – Marc Furton – Fiscal Oversight – Inform (7:39 pm)

Budget to actuals December

- Both campuses are at budget for expenses and revenues.
- The school's debt service coverage ratio is projected to end the year at 2.72 days, above the 1.10 days threshold to remain within the terms of the agreement.
- Unrestricted days cash on hand is projected to end the year at 131 days, above the 60 days required as part of our agreement.
- We are projected to end the year with \$279k in capital expenditures, below the budget of \$327k.
- Student counts are slightly higher at both campuses, resulting in higher per pupil revenue (PPR). The schools also benefited from an increase in mil levy revenue that was the result of November ballot initiatives.
- Increased the salary at both campuses for staffing needs.

Staff Bonus

- Given the school anticipated a significant loss and that now the school looks in a position to finish with a small surplus, it is proposed to give a \$1,000 bonus for each staff member in recognition of the additional challenges arising this school year. It would cost approximately \$160,000 and would reduce unrestricted reserves for the organization from 131 to 125 days cash on hand. It would reduce the projected debt service coverage ratio from 2.72 to 2.42.

Budget revision for 20-21

- Brent Baribeau made a motion to amend the 2020-21 school year budget to include a \$1,000 bonus to all staff members at HASE, HANE, and Network. The motion was seconded by Drew Kent. The motion passed unanimously.

Reach Out – Drew Kent- Inform (7:51 pm)

Fundraising campaign update & Board engagement

In October, Highline formally launched our year-long fundraising campaign to offset the state cuts to education funding due to the economic fallout of the pandemic. We are working to close the \$100,000 funding gap. So far Highline has raised \$26,099 in support of the campaign. As a reminder, fundraising is a revenue line item in our budget, as we are not a fully funded program as a charter school. We need to rally together in order to meet the goal. This includes reaching out to local businesses we patronize, organizations we are connected to, and friends who are in a position to support nonprofits like us during these trying times. Our Board is also committed to making sure our school has adequate resources, and their goal is to raise \$7,000 this year.

Marc said that there are some contacts he could engage with some help. Gina shared that it would be easier for her to engage her network if there was a virtual event to attend or support. Chris shared that Board members can explore small group Zoom sessions with colleagues and friends, that the Network hosted in December and was successful. Highline staff from both campuses attended and shared different aspects of the school's program. Brent said he would be willing to host some small group Zoom sessions. With the strategic plan, we have new goals and projects to fundraise for. Members can keep this in mind when soliciting support from their network.

Please socialize our cause with your network using these resources to get you started:

- [Fundraising Campaign Flyer](#)
- [Sample messaging for email and social media outreach](#)
- [Video: What DEI Means to Us](#)
- [Video: Explore our Southeast Campus](#)
- [2020 Annual Report](#)
- [Highline Academy Donation Page](#)

DEI Committee - Brandon Hellwig - Inform (8:00 pm)

Upcoming February workshop

- The Parents for DEI group have been meeting each month all year and facilitating conversations about race in a healthy, safe space. We are partnering with the Center for Racial Justice in Education again to host a

2-part workshop about 'Understanding Race and Racism' that will be held virtually on February 12 and 13th. The workshop will explain the history of racism in our country and how to deconstruct it. We have spots available for Board members who would like to attend.

Old Business - Brent Baribeau - Inform (8:08 pm)

None

Reach In - Brent Baribeau - Governance - Inform (8:10 pm)

Executive Session

Brent Baribeau made a motion for the Board to proceed to enter executive session for the discussion of the mid-year 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.

- Per statute, executive session discussion of personnel matters must be electronically recorded. The recording of an executive session of the charter school board is not open to the public. The school is required to keep this recording for at least 90 days, in case it is needed for legal reasons, after which it may discard the recording.
- Having received a vote of at least 2/3 majority of the board as the statute requires, the board exited the Zoom meeting room for the board meeting and entered a separate passworded Zoom meeting to enter the executive session. All those not party to the executive session were provided indication that they could remain in the public Zoom meeting room for the Board Meeting until the executive session concluded and the regular meeting resumed.
- The board paused its regular session to enter the executive session.
- 8:12pm to 9:38 pm - recorded discussion of Executive Director supervision and mid-year review.
- Brent Baribeau motioned to exit the executive session and return to the open session. Seconded by Brandon Hellwig. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote to Empower Board President regarding ED Contract Negotiation

- A motion was made by Joe Whitfield for the board to empower the Board President to begin contract negotiations with the E.D for the 2021-2022 school year per the terms discussed during the executive session. The motion was seconded by Ben Carey. The motion passed unanimously.

Reminders/Announcements - Brent Baribeau - Inform (9:42 pm)

Next Full BOD meeting:

- March 22, 2021

Other upcoming Board meetings

- Board DEI training date to be announced
- Fundraising training date to be announced

Adjournment - Brent Baribeau - End Meeting - Vote (9:42 pm)

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