



MINUTES

Full Board of Directors Meeting

September 28, 2021
8:00am

The meeting was held:

[Online via Zoom using this link](#)

Dial-in Number: +16699006833,,82680628588#

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
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
Guerin Gray, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Brittany Joyce, Highline Director of Communications
Austin Young, Northeast Campus Teacher

Other:

Colin Shaw, Southeast Campus Assistant Principal
Yuzo Nieto, RADD Denver

Absent:

Ben Garey, Board Member
Heather Miles, Southeast Campus Teacher
Kim Fronafel, Southeast Campus Teacher
Leah Gerig, Northeast Campus Teacher

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Presenter</i>	<i>Goals</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
Call to Order – Brent Baribeau – Call to Order (8:04 am) • Quorum Establish • Agenda Confirm • Mission and Vision restated Quorum established. The agenda was adopted with no changes. Grace Nailing read aloud the mission and vision statement. She said that as a community we are actively making an effort to include everyone. At Highline we reinforce that we all matter and that we are the same no matter where we come from.			
Consent Agenda – Brent Baribeau – Governance – Vote (8:06 am) • Minutes from the August 30 and September 8, 2021 meetings A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Drew Kent to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.			
See BOD Packet for: (8:07 am) • Black Excellence Plan Presentation • DPS Site Visit Report • STAR and CMAS data • September Financials • Restorative Practices Presentation • Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) presentation			
Public Comment (8:07 am) None			
Executive Director Update - Chris Ferris - Inform (8:08 am) Update on DPS visit to HASE for 2021-22 renewal • DPS saw consistency in classrooms and high quality teaching. • On the site visit report we overwhelmingly received ratings of ‘exceeds’ and ‘meets’ expectations. We received only 2 partially meets ratings. • DPS will observe our October 25, 2021 Board meeting. They will also interview the Executive Director, Board Chair, Board members, students and parents. • We do not know which DPS Board members will be voting on our renewal since the election is in November (the renewal vote will be in January). • There are some waivers that DPS Board members are seeking to pull back or make the waivers more cumbersome to achieve. We are required to provide replacement policies when applying for a waiver. • The process for renewal this year was the same as in the past except the deadline for submitting documentation. Schools had to use 2019 data in large part for the report. For next year, schools’ UIPs will have a greater weight in the decision making process. 2021-22 Black Excellence Plan • DPS introduced the Black Excellence report in 2019 and Black Excellence Plans in 2020. • The Black Excellence Plan is about unlocking opportunities from which our Black students have been historically excluded. We know there are structures and systems that have maintained inequity. We must breakdown and rebuild these with a culturally responsive lens. • Black Excellence involves creating an inclusive environment for family engagement, socio-emotional support, and celebration of culture. Black Excellence does not mean setting a standard based on white achievement or one version of success. We fundamentally believe that Black students can learn and achieve. • In the 2019-2020 school year we led several DEI initiatives in support of Black students and all students: ○ Staff trainings ○ Parent workshops			

- Board workshops and the passing of our 5-year strategic plan which names becoming an anti-racist school a goal
- 2021-2022 Plans
 - We will facilitate more discussions with our Black families
 - DPS is planning to publicize the Black Excellence Plans more this year. They will be posted on the DPS website and we have to be more focused on what goes into the documents. It is important to be thoughtful and capture the work we are already doing, and our plans to do even more to support Black students.
- Main Focus Areas by Campus:
 - HANE:
 - Students report not feeling challenged - this was more visible for Black students.
 - 10% fewer parents feel we value equity and diversity than in other charter schools.
 - HASE
 - Equity gap in academic achievement is greater now compared to pre-pandemic.
 - There is less engagement among Black families in school activities. We would like to better understand what activities would be of value and of interest for them.
 - Black students feel less understood and less supported in understanding their identity, even though they feel safe at school.
- Our Parents for DEI will help support these efforts by hosting a Black Excellence Roundtable forum on October 11, 2021. The group along with Highline staff and Board members will:
 - Call/text families with Black students to explain the meeting and personally invite them
 - Facilitate small group discussions during the forum
 - Facilitate a forum in the spring for 360 feedback to share their thoughts on how the school is doing in supporting Black students
- Board members discussed crafting a vision statement for our 2025 Black Excellence Plan. The vision statement that was agreed upon by the Board was: *In partnership with families, Highline will create an environment that will empower all Black students to Reach In, Reach Up, and Reach Out so they can fully realize their academic and personal excellence by 2025.*
- Brent Baribeau made a motion and was seconded by Kamrin Coffey to adopt the Black Excellence vision statement that was created during the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
- We will measure success based on the goals defined from data points on assessments and student surveys. The Black Excellence Plans are due October 30, 2021. We will review the final plans at the October 25, 2021 Board meeting.

Principal Update - Guerin Gray and Sarah Verni-Lau- Inform (8:34 am)

Priority Improvement Strategies for Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

HASE:

UIP is done every other year due to the school's green status on the SPF. The information presented today is a draft and will be updated with action steps after STAR data is released on October 10th.

- Priority Performance Challenges: The last plan covered the 2019 -2020 school year and identified challenges in FRL (Free and Reduced Lunch), equity gap in Math and ELA, and early literacy equity gaps.
- We do not have the data for 2021-22, but we think that the equity gap increased during the pandemic in these areas.
- Priority Improvement Challenges: Equity gaps as measured by STAR based on ethnicity. We see that Kinder and 1st grade students are coming in at a lower level than prior to the pandemic. Students are exhibiting a need for more support in social emotional learning and understanding the school culture. This is attributed to trauma caused by the pandemic, shifting enrollment leading to many new students, and the disruption created over the last 2 years with more students missing school. This is consistent with state data around mental health challenges for young students.

HASE Improvement Strategies:

Early Literacy Gaps:

- Restructuring intervention - was done in advance since the gap was anticipated.
- Redesigning curriculum to incorporate content about racial identity and anti-racism.
- New K-2 Literacy curriculum

Social Emotional Learning

- Focus on Reach values
- SEL classes taught by Homeroom teachers based on CASEL (non for profit firm out of Chicago to help students adjust to coming back to school)
- Community/advisory time daily

HANE:

The last UIP was written in 2020-21 and has to be completed every year due to the school's current orange rating on the district SPF (in process to move to the State SPF which puts the campus at a yellow rating). This information is a draft and waiting for results from the STAR assessment. 2020-2021 Challenges included student achievement on Math, Literacy and Literacy growth for below grade level (BGL), significantly below grade level (SBGL) and for students of color. Data for 2021-22 is forthcoming, however initial results indicate that the achievement numbers may have stalled in 2020-21.

HANE Improvement Strategies:

- Number of students BGL, SBGL in Literacy, Math (STAR measured)
 - Revitalization of intervention program and use of intervention block
 - Focus on grade level + skill-level content
 - Continue MLE (multilingual education, former ESL) programming success. 40% of the students fall into this group.
- Early Literacy Growth in Reading
 - Relates to adoption on new curriculum, teacher training through CDE (state wide requirement)
 - ECE/K specific intervention to close gaps before they develop
- SEL challenges for all students after the upheaval of the pandemic
 - Continue with strength of REACH program
 - Use of BESS screener and SEL programming (Positive Action, Riding the Waves, etc.)
- Family/community engagement in the school
 - Student-led conferences: Students are preparing the bundles to demonstrate their learning progress to parents
 - Consultation with larger groups of parent/guardians

The UIP deadline traditionally has been in the Spring, however this year it has been moved up to October 15, 2021. Reach Up committee data is helpful since it presents data from another perspective. We noticed a big connection between social emotional support and community engagement. If the Board is more active in the community, the students and their family will see the support from the board and give a different perspective.

HASE Social-emotional conflict resolution

- We use restorative practice for conflict resolution. We received 'exceeding' ratings during the DPS visit on this.
- Restorative practice seeks to repair relationships. Restorative practice shifts the conversation between teachers and students to be less punishment-oriented and to offer an opportunity for all people affected by an action to have dialogue about how to make things right and restore the classroom community.
- It is an equitable approach to solving problems, to build and maintain relationships, to keep students in school and to provide learning opportunities.
- Key principles: Respect (other points of view), Responsibility (role you played in a situation), Repair Relationship (must be rebuilt as a part of the conversation).
- As a result of using this practice, we see the drastic reduction in suspensions and in recidivism. This approach gives students a voice and teaches them to be problem solvers; it facilitates empowerment instead of compliance.

HANE Social-emotional conflict resolution

- Big progress was made in the last few years. Our SEL program nods to the [cereal bowl analogy](#): Every Monday and Tuesday we have meetings and lessons to focus on emotional development.
- We use the Positive Action SEL website, which was very important last year during remote learning and continuing this work with students. The website is interactive and allows students to ask for help.
- Behavioral and Emotional Screening System (BESS): It is self reported and we used different categories to capture data for different groups. The assessment is captured in the Fall and in the Spring. The data can be drilled down to the student and then we can help that student if needed. Having the ability to quickly respond is very important to us.
- We understand the importance of parents being educated on this as well, since sometimes there is an expectation that bad behavior should be punished. This is an opportunity where we can provide positive education to parents.

Reach Up - Gwen Maurello - Inform (9:23 am)

A major struggle has been having reliable data given the pandemic and remote learning last year.

STAR reports for the beginning of 2021-22

- STAR highlights from baseline data for 2021-22
 - It will be important to look for growth throughout the year
 - We need to continue to focus in on disaggregated groups
 - We can accurately pull reports for disaggregated groups now, which will help us align to our strategic plan and our goals for supporting academic achievement across student populations
 - Campuses are able to focus on individual students from the data

2020-21 CMAS results

Not all grade levels and content areas were tested last year. We do not have reliable growth data because of this.

- Participation by campus was above the DPS average for both campuses for Math and ELA:
 - HANE: 71% for ELA, 73% for math
 - HASE: 71% for ELA, 78% for math
 - DPS: 51% for ELA, 46% for math
- HASE outperformed the district in all areas and outperformed the majority of neighboring schools in all areas as well. HANE kept pace with past performance and outperformed the majority of neighboring schools in all areas.
- At HASE, participation was not representative of the full population that we serve. We will use STAR for progress monitoring and compare that with internal data. There will be a focus on looking for growth in October. We will continue intervention groups to meet individual needs.
- AT HANE, there was solid growth where we were able to measure it, with no ground lost. We will continue to focus on meeting individual student needs.

Finance Update - Marc Furton - Inform (9:40 am)

Budget to Actuals

- ESSR II revenue funding should be \$100k more for each campus.
- PPR revenue is trending above baseline.
- Rent and building expenses are trending higher based on when we made those payments this year.
- When we revise our budget, it will account for the new curriculum that was purchased for 2021-22.
- Debt service coverage ratio is 3.24 (per the covenant must remain above 1.10).
- 139 days of unrestricted cash on hand (per the covenant we need to remain above 60 days).
- The school has \$2.1 million in reserves.
- Southeast: 22% to budget in revenues; 17% to budget in expenses.

- Northeast: 21% to budget in revenues; 16% to budget in expenses.

Staff retention report and discussion of retention bonus

- It is a hard time in education. Students are coming in with a high degree of social-emotional issues and adjusting after being in remote learning for much of last year. Schools are engaging in aggressive poaching of teachers across the metro area.
- There are two DPS schools that are considering closing due to teacher shortages.
- At Highline, we have seen some teachers leave after the 2021-22 school year started.
- Would like to propose a \$1,000 retention bonus in October 2021 for all staff who returned from 2020-21, and then another \$1,000 bonus in May 2022 for all staff who remain throughout the 2021-22 year.
- The total cost would be \$120k for HASE and \$130k for HANE. We can fund this without going into reserves.
- Proposing an investment in our staff who are the lifeblood of our school. This is the one thing that the Board can do to demonstrate it's recognition of the current challenges staff face. A hand-written note from the Board could be another way to show appreciation for staff.
- A motion was made by Brent Baribeau and seconded by Joe Whitfield to approve a \$1,000 retention bonus in October 2021 (for returning staff from 2020-21) and a \$1,000 retention bonus in May 2022 (for staff who remain for the 2021-22 school year). The motion passed unanimously.

DEI Committee - Grace Nailing and Brandon Hellwig - Inform (9:57 am)

The committee will send out an email with updates due to exceeding the time limit for the meeting. The committee would welcome participation from more Board members.

Old Business - Chris Ferris - Inform (9:58 am)

None

Reminders/Announcements - Brent Baribeau - Inform (9:58 am)

- Next BOD meeting: October 25, 2021 at 6:15pm [here](#)
- HASE Cultural Fair is October 9, 2021
- HANE Harvest Festival is October 23, 2021

Adjournment - Brent Baribeau - Adjourn Meeting - Vote (10:00 am)

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.