



Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School  
1735 Saxapahaw-Bethlehem Church Road  
Saxapahaw, NC 27340  
(336) 376-1122

## BOARD MINUTES

**Date:** August 23, 2017

**Location:** Hawbridge School

**Attending Board Members:** Todd Nicolet (Chairperson), Rowena Khot (Vice Chairperson), James Cajka (Treasurer), Karamarie Fecho (Secretary), Lori Edmonds, Jonathan Romm, Liz Sullivan

**Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff:** Kenny Moles (Executive Director), Jonathan Farmer (Faculty Representative to the Board), Daryl Feldman (co-Assistant Director and Faculty Member), Jennifer Shelton (co-Assistant Director and Faculty Member), Emily Martin (Guidance Counselor), Maya Ciccotti (EC Coordinator)

- I. Call to Order
  - o 6:06 pm.
- II. Roll Call
  - o 6:06 pm.
- III. Approval of Agenda
  - o Motion to approve. Seconded. Unanimously supported. 6:07 pm.
- IV. Public Comment
  - o No public comment.
- V. Consent Items
  - A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes
    - o Motion to approve pending minor edit to include Jonathan Romm in the list of attendees. Seconded. Unanimously supported. ~6:10 pm.
  - B. Future Meetings/Events:
    1. Board Meeting: 6:00 pm on Wednesday, September 20, 2017
      - Motion to approve. Seconded. Unanimously supported. ~6:10 pm.
- VI. Reports
  - A. Board
    - o Nothing to report.
  - B. Director
    1. Enrollment Update



- Director reported that the new school year began very smoothly. Current student enrollment is at 320 students.
2. Place-Based Education (PBE)
- Director explained that PBE is a pedagogy or approach to teaching that the school is adopting as a way of fostering and enhancing interdisciplinary learning. Director and Faculty Representative Farmer explained that PBE considers learning in the context of the 'place' or environment in which learning takes place (e.g., Saxapahaw, Alamance County, North Carolina). The idea is to weave PBE throughout the curriculum, while also incorporating interdisciplinary learning, but not concentrating the school's efforts on end-of-unit interdisciplinary events.
  - Board and Director discussed examples of how to integrate PBE and interdisciplinary learning within the school's curriculum.
3. Improving Attendance Initiative
- School is making a concerted effort to improve student attendance. Faculty emphasized the importance of student attendance at both open house sessions. 'Truancy' vs 'chronic absences' are now clearly defined in the student handbook. Director emphasized that truancy is not the challenge, but chronic absence is. The absences are largely due to student/family travel and failure to attend end-of-unit interdisciplinary events.

#### C. Treasurer

- Treasurer reported that the school budget remains sound. The budget is ~\$80K higher due to a lack of expenditure for the budgeted potential school expansion project.
- Director clarified that the noted deficit is not really a deficit, but rather an *apparent* deficit due to a delay in receipt of county funds. Director further clarified that the line item in the general fund for a planned playground is not expected to represent a major expense.
- Assistant Director Feldman noted that the largest projected maintenance expenditure is likely to be for the automated school entrance system, which is anticipated to cost approximately \$4500 to \$5000.
- Treasurer and Director noted that the student athletics account has been reorganized, as discussed at the last board meeting. Funds and expenditures are now organized in terms of general funds and individual sport funds. The restructuring allows for a more equitable distribution of funds, in that donations and fundraising efforts can be targeted for a specific athletic program, rather than lumped into the general fund.
- Director emphasized that while the school should not run a budget deficit, the school is currently positioned to consider expending its



reserved funds, as this is good accounting practice. Board Chair noted that this is a different mindset than that held in previous years, when the school did not have reserved funds, so the Board should remain cognizant of the balance between over-expenditure and over-savings.

## VII. Unfinished Business

### A. Hawbridge Expansion Update

- Board Member Romm stated that the Board School Expansion Subcommittee is waiting to receive a mark-up of a new potential campus design from Little Diversified Architectural Consulting. Director will follow up with Little. He noted that Little is scheduled to attend the September regular meeting of the Board in order to provide an update. Director noted that Little has been paid for all phase I work.

## VIII. New Business

### A. Board Governance

1. Membership
2. Officers

- Board Chair Nicolet would like to discuss potential amendments to the bylaws regarding membership and officers.
- Board engaged in extensive discussions regarding challenges with the current bylaws and potential benefits that might be realized through amendments to the bylaws. The discussion included a consideration of former Board Member Morse's recommendations, which were submitted to the Board during his final Board meeting before his tenure ended.
- Director provided information on an open discussion among charter school directors regarding governance structures in place at other charter schools. Most (perhaps 60%) function as traditional charter schools, with a simple application and board- or self-appointed members to the board.
- Board Chair Nicolet requested that Board members consider the discussion and iterate on any potential amendments offline. Goal is to have an initial draft of any amendments to the bylaws ready for discussion by the November regular meeting of the Board. The amendments pertain to Article 3.3 of the bylaws.

### B. Personnel Request

- Director noted that the school's new 4<sup>th</sup>-grade class has prompted a need for a new full-time EC staff member. The school currently has two EC teachers, but the staff and administration believe that they don't have the resources necessary to meet current demands.
- EC Coordinator Ciccotti reported that the school seems to be attracting students with special needs, most of whom require extensive service time per



day. While this may be a reflection of the growing national trend for inclusion of kids with special needs within the mainstream school system, she emphasized the additional workload that this places on the school. Ciccotti anticipates the need to establish 50 IEPs for the current school year, with paperwork that needs to be completed within 90 days per each request. She also noted that the school has many more students with 504 plans in place, some of which may transition to IEP plans during the current assessment period. Ciccotti acknowledged that the school's administration is researching additional funding mechanisms to support these efforts, including external grant awards.

- Director noted that in the absence of funding for a new EC teacher, any additional resources to support EC students would likely be drawn from personnel staffing for the next school year. Director emphasized that this challenge is actually a positive reflection on the school and how the school responds to students with special needs. Board Chair agreed and stated that the additional expenditure for a new EC staff member is a necessary cost for running a high-quality school. Board Chair suggested that the Administration considers how to prepare for the projected head counts of students with special needs over the coming years.
- Faculty Representative Farmer emphasized how welcoming the school as a whole is for students with special needs and how exceptional the current EC team and guidance counselor are for meeting those needs.
  - Motion to approve funding of a new EC teacher. Seconded. Unanimously supported. 7:36 pm.

#### C. Access to Restrooms for All Students

- Board and Director have been reviewing the issues related to NC House Bill 2. This includes consultation with legal experts.
- Background is that HB2 was repealed. Board has no legal requirement to do anything. Board questioned if they *should* or *can* do anything. Legal opinion and Board consensus was that the Board should *not* enact a policy regarding bathroom access, but *can* put forth a position statement.
- Board iterated on the position statement and reached consensus on the following:
  - "We support students using the restroom that matches the gender with which they identify, or using the restroom arrangements with which they are most comfortable, and encourage the Director to assess each situation on a case by case basis, should a request arise."
  - Motion to approve the position statement as written. Seconded. Unanimously supported. 8:34 pm.

#### D. Approval of Executive Director's Goals

- Board Chair and Director provided an overview of the goals and proposed edits to those goals.
  - Motion to approve. Seconded. Six supported; 1 abstained from vote (Board Member Fecho, who did not have time to review the new goals prior to vote). 8:39 pm.



IX. Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn. Seconded. Unanimously supported. 8:39 pm.

*Minutes recorded jointly by Liz Sullivan, Board Member, and Karamarie Fecho, Board Member and Secretary, and respectively submitted by Fecho.*