



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School
Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Wednesday, September 23rd, 2020

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

I. Call to Order – 6:03 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members: Todd Nicolet (Chair), Natalya Barker (Vice Chair) Kathryn Brown, Matt Buckmaster, Christina Fisher, Dianne Ford, Renee Lynch
Not in Attendance: Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), April Williams (Secretary)

Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff: Mya Ciccotti (Executive Director), Jonathan Farmer (Faculty Representative to the Board), Daryl Feldman (Assistant Director of Student Services), Emily Martin (School Counselor), Jennifer Shelton (Assistant Director of Curriculum and Instruction)

Other Attendees: Jason Imhof and Ben Culp (Aspire Construction Management)

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

No public comment

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes:

Minutes from August 26 board meeting and September 9 special closed session were approved with amendments to committee member designations.

B. Future Meetings/Events:

The Board approved our next meeting for Wednesday, October 28, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. Zoom Virtual Meeting.

VI. Reports

A. Board

Committee Updates and Selections: (Fundraising, Communications, Renovations)

Fundraising Committee – Kathryn reported that the committee will meet virtually on October 14 and will report updates at October Board meeting.

Communications Committee – Dianne reported that the committee was not able to meet this month due to deaths in the family, but the committee plans to work next month on updating the Board web page and creating a charge for the committee. Dianne thanked Todd for crafting the messaging on behalf of the Board to the Saxapahaw community announcing the construction project starting for the expansion. Todd commented regarding the website and prioritizing the expansion page in particular, as we will have lots of questions from the community and will want this page to be up-to-date and accurate and a place to share updates of the progression of the project. Dianne will be in touch with Todd to discuss his thoughts further.

Renovations Committee – Renee reported that the committee plans to meet in person on Monday, September 28, at the school with Daryl. They will start on their plan to assess needs and review what they may already have available that will be suitable for the lower school expansion.

B. Director

- Q1 Survey Results for Families & Q1 Survey for Faculty:

Two surveys were given, one to families and one to faculty. The survey results will be posted to the Hawbridge website. Mya has shared results with faculty ahead of their faculty meeting.

Family Survey – 285 responses received (82% of families); Mya feels like this was a good representation of families across all grades.

- More than 50% of parents responded that their child is making academic progress during remote instruction so far this year. 15% of families responded that their child is making exceptional academic progress.
- 37% reported that remote instruction is meeting their child’s learning needs; 16% strongly agree.
- 50.9% responded “yes” to supporting their child’s return to the Hawbridge school for in-person instruction; 49.1% responded “no.”
- Mya has been attending school leader meetings with DPI to learn about logistics and models for students returning to school.

Faculty Survey – 25 responses

- 92% of students are passing my classes with 60% or higher.
- 92% of students are attending class as required.
- 84% described themselves, based on Q1 instruction, as “feeling better than I did 4 weeks ago,” and 80% chose “I have my moments, but I think I’m okay.”
- A handful of the faculty are exhausted and worried about burning out, feel like they are getting behind.
- Majority are feeling okay; one teacher responded that they are having fun!

- In response to re-opening under Plan B on Oct 26, 76% of faculty would not support returning, 24% support returning.
- This last response is where the rubber meets the road for Mya: Evenly split among parents for re-opening, while the faculty (many of whom fall into a critical age bracket for risk factors with COVID-19) indicate 75% are not comfortable coming into the building.
- Jonathan Farmer added that in his experience with his students that the percentage of students failing is comparable to what he would see in a typical school year and attendance is higher in his class.
- Colby McKenzie feels same as Jonathan, that survey results would be comparable if the circumstance were face-to-face learning. There will always be a handful of students who won't put forth effort whether they were in class or not; attendance is so much better virtual.
- Jana Carter agreed that if the school decided to move to Plan B re-opening, there would be students who would not be attending school due to their circumstances. Also, fourth graders are very boisterous, and it would be hard to keep them contained for their safety.
- Sarah Cornette (Performance Arts teacher) expressed that she has had to adapt curriculum quite a bit; kids' work has been really amazing, what they have turned in. Attendance has been a lot better and would echo other teachers, but won't pretend that it's not a struggle with teaching students visual art. A lot of kids have started paying better attention and most are performing well.
- Mya said that she was not sure the risk outweighs the benefit of school re-opening. She will be meeting with faculty tomorrow to talk about 2nd quarter to alleviate some of the anxiety and will announce on Friday.
- Renee offered that even if the school were to re-open, there is still serious burnout with teachers having to offer the remote option and in-class instruction, asking them to do double-time work and take on more risk.
- Matt stated that he felt that the Board's position on re-opening should be that we are in support of the Executive Director and the faculty of this difficult decision in an incredibly challenging time.
- Todd Nicolet appreciated the family perspective and focus on faculty perspective. The teacher perspective is incredibly important. This is a difficult decision and we all appreciate the thoughtful way we have gained feedback and opening this conversation to all involved. We offer support going forward from the Board.
- Purchased Lottery Software Program for this upcoming school year. It will be critical with the school doubling in size and receiving close to 400 applicants to have a solution that is both comprehensive and affordable. Mya is pleased that the company chosen has been very responsive, and that other local charter schools use it as well. The lottery will be held in February, and the application for next school year needs to be up on the website sooner than later. Application will link to the new software, and we will begin advertising for open lottery.

- Remediation Zoom Meeting – Students who are not passing a class have the option to attend an 8:15 a.m. Zoom meeting to help get their grades up.
- Student Ambassadors Club – Emily shared that the club will lead the “Start with Hello” program as part of the Sandy Hook Promise “Say Something” anonymous reporting system. It has been a bit challenging to plan a week-long event virtually. Their plan is to focus on new students in all grades, and they have divided into groups and invited new students to attend Zoom Lunch with ambassadors and Haw Buddies. The student council has led new elementary schoolers in conversations over zoom. Great to see students at different grade levels together. Goal is to make sure faculty know who will be in the building eventually and for students to learn faces of new students as well. Student council has been posting on Instagram faces of new students with a goal of getting to know one another in virtual ways.
- Communication with Parents and Students – Mya found that the Sunday call to families with updates for the upcoming week wasn’t always making it to the students. The new student google group has been a success in getting communication directly to students. Mya emails every Friday at 2 p.m. and a lot of times student council has been making announcements regarding school government, their Instagram page, etc. It has been another way to really try to tap into our student body and make sure that everybody’s feeling like a part of the Hawbridge school.

C. Treasurer

- Dawnya was not able to attend but in an email to the board prior to the meeting stated that she had a chance to glance at this month’s budget update and doesn’t have any major issues or questions to report.

D. Faculty Representative

- Jonathan reported that there is no news from the faculty but added that he and other faculty members feel Hawbridge is kind of a second home for them. He has been so impressed to see the teachers and administrators working together to troubleshoot and to think about how to reach kids who are struggling and to find ways of making lessons work in this environment. It is not just the teachers, the families and kids as well, all working together to make remote learning work.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Hawbridge Expansion Update (Aspire Construction)

- CT Wilson Status: Not quite on site with CT Wilson, survey company out on site soon and set up stakes. Plan to have two project signs posted at the entrance with a rendering of the site and recognitions for project participants. From a contract standpoint everything seems to be in place.
- Contracts: Contract is signed by CT Wilson and Todd has also been signing the documents that are being circulated for signature including USDA loan documents. USDA will need to close before CT can begin grading the site.

- Title: Attorney, Rick Stephenson, working on updating abstract title and buying title insurance. He is reviewing the bylaws and resolutions.
- Easements: 11 easements on Jordan Property and 1 on Claire and Doug's property will be recorded on Friday.
- Closing: Won't be next week, will most likely be following week.
- Construction Planning: Have started submission process on key materials, structural steel concrete, pre-engineered building materials. They have received some of those and submitted to Little, who will review for the design. OAC Meeting (Owner Architecture Contract) will be scheduled for once a month; the first one is scheduled for September 24, 2020, last Thursday of the month. Making sure everyone is on the same page.
- Agricultural Electrical Fence on Doug and Claire's Property: Setting up a temporary fence during construction to keep cattle off the site. Discussion on a more permanent fence once the school is built. Doug will be renting the farmland out to farmers to bring livestock there to graze.
 - Natalya brought up liability concerns with a student with underlying health concern accidentally touching the electric fence.
 - Mya noted that the insurance company will be coming out to take an assessment for coverage as well and there is reason to believe our premiums would go up if the electric fence was reachable by students. The other concern is that we have communicated to our community that this new facility will open so much outdoor space for the students, but now we would also need to warn about an electric fence.
 - Renee asked if we can build an additional fence in front of the existing one.
 - Todd asked Jason to please work up some options with the team in keeping in mind our budget to solve this issue for the board and Mya to review.
 - Jason agreed and he said they should have a couple of options by next board meeting; he also said no access will be available to the trail leading to the meadow, that an orange snow fence will be on the perimeter of the entire site.
- Status of DOT permits: Regarding the update on the crosswalk on Saxapahaw-Bethlehem Church Road, the plan is to get all permitting and approvals completed with DOT and construction underway and then start to study alternate safety options for the crosswalk. We have talked to architect about putting details to this to address safety concerns and make sure we don't get too far into construction before we start to put details to this plan. Will develop a timeline that works with the board and would like to pull in other stakeholders/community groups.
Mya noted that the Saxapahaw Traffic Group and their petition would go hand-in-hand with this discussion; we can discuss further in agenda. We are a couple of months away from a plan with DOT finalized.

B. Grievance Policy Recommendations

- Todd thanked Natalya and April for providing comments and edits to the draft.
- We have tried to add some clarity in regards to Level 3 written decision is considered Final, and the portion around the subgroup panel not only would be weighing in on the grievance but also would be sharing that with the full board so that the written decision is delivered from the full board.
- Todd noted that April had some additional points to consider regarding parts of the policy that we haven't necessarily had to address before and could use some extra clarity. Todd proposed to the board to make a plan to check in on this policy once a year (perhaps next summer) to make sure that we set a practice as a whole that when we make major changes to a policy that we make a point to check in after time has elapsed to make sure that the policy is working the way it was intended and to reflect on it.
- Dianne reminded that we have a Google Calendar that we could drop reminders like that there.
- Kathryn asked if we could keep the ideas for clarification to the grievance policy recorded that Todd and April discussed, so that we would have them available when we revisit this topic next summer.
- Todd agreed perhaps we could make it a point that the secretary is responsible for adding these follow-ups to the future agenda for the corresponding month.
- April has a draft with her notes and comments will add this to the June 2021 agenda.
Note: Mya has added agendas for the remainder of the year to the Google Drive.
Note: Kathryn has added this as a topic to the proposed June 2021 agenda and will ask April to add her notes to the June 2021 folder so we can revisit at that meeting.
- Todd Nicolet called for a vote for the revised grievance policy.
Natalya Barker moved to approve the revised grievance policy. Renee Lynch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. New Business

A. Saxapahaw Truck Traffic Petition

- Mya reported that the Saxapahaw Truck Traffic Petition has re-opened and discussed at the condo association meeting. They are excited that we will be discussing this issue this evening and requested to send out to the Hawbridge Google group and out to the families as well. They are wanting this to be a collective support from the business community, neighbors, and school as they believe it would be more meaningful to the DOT, especially with the new school opening next year. Mya said she would report back with our decision.
- Group discussion and consensus:
Todd made a motion for a vote for a letter of support of the Saxapahaw Truck Traffic Petition and No Through Truck Traffic zone pending review of draft by board. Kathryn seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

In review, as a principle, moving forward we would not use our identities as individual Hawbridge board members (i.e., Hawbridge email addresses) to sign petitions or take other actions without consensus of the board. Natalya also pointed that the communication policy in our by-laws “Board Operational Policy” under “Board Communication Guidelines” outlines this directive (see page 6 of Hawbridge Policy Manual). Board is in agreement.

In addition to the letter that will be drafted in support of the petition the board, the board will message the family Google group with a notification and explanation of our support and a link to the petition if they should feel inclined to sign it as well. Todd will draft both documents and route to the entire board for review.

B. Renovation Committee and Budget for renovations

- Daryl reported that he has been using the DPI facility guide and Mya to carefully assess the renovations of the existing school as we transition it to the lower school.
- Priority Areas:
 - Program vision is to have 18 different learning spaces in the lower school now 15 classrooms Kindergarten – 7th grade and 3 specialist areas for Art, Music, and Outdoors classes. We are shy one space currently. Will take the existing science lab and divide it into two classrooms.
 - The class that is located the farthest from the entrance has served as a faculty room in the past but would now be a learning space with plans to install a 4th wall and door to limit noise from the hallways.
 - Need for more cabinet and storage space for teachers in the new lower school.
 - Downstairs space is a challenge specifically the footsteps and noises from upstairs, investigate the cost of a drop ceiling to remove the noise from above.
 - Safety for young group of students joining the Hawbridge school, once a visitor gains entry in through the main entrance they can walk about 100 ft before they are confronted by an admin or faculty or get to the front office. Recommending renovations to stop this lengthy space between front office and entrance. In addition, the store front exit and rear patio are also soft areas that could benefit from surveillance.
 - Looking forward to touring space with Christina and Renee
 - Dianne mentioned that most kindergarten classes have their own bathrooms; there are a lot of advantages to that and to include in the conversation to use the Shift workspace to expand our footprint if needed.
 - One section of K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd (17 students per classroom) and two sections of 4th 20 students per section 5th, 6th and 7th would have 3 sections (60 to 66 children total). Mya noted that we have a gradual increase in class size after 3rd grade because there is a state cap on the amount of students allowed in K-3. The waiting list is normally larger in 4th – 8th.

- Mya asked about the budget for this committee; Todd indicated this committee will have latitude to get estimates and recommendations and then bring that to the board. Use that detailed planning to arrive at a number that we can afford.
- Mya noted we will continue to embrace our vision and mission including the focus on outdoors through environmental sustainability and utilizing outdoor classroom space.
- Renee mentioned having a representative from a school that is more closely in line with our model in regards to the emergent curriculum would be beneficial since we are not setting up our space like what you may see in a traditional public classroom and we want this space to be reflective of our values and curriculum.

VIII. Adjourn – 8:02 p.m.
Motion passed unanimously.
