



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

Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Location: Virtual Meeting

I. Call to Order – 6:01 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members: Todd Nicolet (Chair), Natalya Barker (Vice Chair), Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), April Williams (Secretary), Kathryn Brown, Matt Buckmaster, Christina Fisher, Dianne Ford, Renee Lynch

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), Monika Caruso

III. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

A. Monika Caruso raised concern that it may be difficult for parents and community members to know how to attend the board's virtual meetings (by going to the Board web page on the school's website, opening the current Agenda, and clicking on the Zoom link) and suggested that families may need help knowing how to participate.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

The board unanimously approved minutes from January 27, 2021.

B. Future Meetings/Events:

- The board unanimously approved our next meeting for Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

- Renee Lynch and Natalya Barker volunteered to represent the board at the virtual lottery on March 1, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

VI. Reports

A. Board

- Groundbreaking Committee (Kathryn Brown) – Based on the most recent construction timeline from Jason, the topping-out ceremony will likely be held the third or fourth week of May. The committee will meet again in early April to begin planning this event.
- Fundraising Committee (Kathryn Brown) – Dianne met with Robin and Tony at the site to continue brainstorming ideas for grants. Kathryn and Renee will meet tomorrow to discuss how to collaborate between the fundraising and renovations committees.
- Communications Committee (April Williams) – New update flyers were posted this month on various bulletin boards around Saxapahaw and at Ulvia’s Mexican Restaurant. Our expansion was mentioned in the recent edition of *The Saxapahaw Current*. The final press release went out to more than twenty media organizations, and as of today, it’s been published by the *Mebane Enterprise* and the *Burlington Times-News*. Dianne has agreed to provide updated photos and web content for the “Expansion” page of the website on an ongoing basis as construction continues to progress. Lastly, the committee reminded the admins to let us know if there is anything the committee can do to help them.
- Renovations Committee (Renee Lynch) – Renee met with Daryl to discuss how the committee can continue to support the lower school in its renovations as we wait for the larger construction part of the project to get underway. They identified opportunities for enhancements, such as beautification projects for the front of the building, repairing some water damage on the exterior, making strides toward more outdoor learning spaces like an outdoor classroom or tiered outdoor seating, and reimagining the ramp at the back of the building. The committee chair will meet with the Fundraising Committee chair to see if there are grant writing opportunities that can help with some of these goals.
- Selection Committee (Matt Buckmaster) – Committee members include Matt (chair), Dianne, Kathryn, and April as board reps, Jonathan and Emily as faculty reps, and Kori Oakley, secretary of PASTA, as the parent rep. The committee met on Monday, February 22, to review and update the board application. The full board reviewed these changes, discussed additional edits, and agreed on a final document to use for calls for applications. The board agreed that sitting members wishing to re-apply for their current positions must submit a full application (not just a resume).

B. Director

- Reopening of school under Plan B – After the Governor strongly recommended schools’ reopening and moved educators up in line to receive the vaccine, Hawbridge has decided to reopen under Plan B at 50% capacity. We will

continue to offer Plan C, remote instruction, for any student who wants it. Last week families received the Reopening Handbook that outlines in detail the procedures and protocols for reopening safely, which faculty had a chance to review and respond to prior to sharing with families. Families have until the end of this week to decide how they would like to enroll their students for the remainder of the year and respond accordingly in the survey that went out and is due by 5 p.m. this Friday. As of today, 63% of families have responded (54% in Plan B, 46% in Plan C, fairly balanced across grades). If families do not respond to the survey, their student will be enrolled in Plan C, remote learning. Based on the numbers now, we anticipate around 175 students enrolled in Plan B, divided among two cohorts that alternate weeks, with 60-80 students in the building at one time, approximately 6-8 students in a classroom at a time. There will be a faculty meeting tomorrow with staff to outline what admins have planned for cleaning procedures. Some faculty are scheduled to get vaccines as early as this weekend.

- The question was raised if faculty have any option regarding their return to in-person teaching. *Answer:* Yes, if a faculty member has a medical note saying they cannot be in the building, then they may continue to teach remotely. So far, this applies to one faculty member.
- The question was raised if there will be opportunities for cleaning between classes, especially surfaces that students touch often like desks. *Answer:* Yes. The bell schedule has been changed, increasing the transition time between classes from three minutes to seven minutes so that teachers and admins can clean frequently touched surfaces (desks, light switches, doorknobs, etc.).
- The question was raised if students have the option to return to Plan C if they enroll in Plan B and find that it causes excessive anxiety or some other medical need arises that prohibits in-person learning. *Answer:* Yes, if a student provides a medical note from a doctor confirming that they cannot attend in-person instruction. For the safety of everyone, the school must otherwise remain firm that students finish the school year under the plan they enroll in, as it is how we can ensure proper social distancing in the school building.
- A question was raised about how the community Q&A went earlier this week. *Answer:* It went very well. The event was open to 25 families to ensure it remained manageable. Families that signed up but were unable to attend were sent a recording of the event. Emily agreed to send a link to that video to the full board as well.
- Temporary location for upper school – Mya and Ed (the church rep) will be working closely with the Orange County Planning Board to meet all of the requirements for us to use the church space. It is likely to be a very time-consuming process. As a result, the admin team is continuing to work on a contingency plan.

- Lottery – There has been a huge uptick in the lottery. The lower school now has 337 applicants for roughly 200 seats, and the upper school has 103 applicants for 120 seats, for a total of 440 applicants. The question was raised if there is a place on the website that lists the number of sections for each grade and class size. *Answer:* No, because it has been so fluctuating. Families are encouraged to reach out and ask when they have questions, and that information was provided at each of the open houses. Also note, we enroll up to October 1, so families can still apply even after the lottery on March 1.
- Renovations – Jason sent today a design proposal; will make sure it gets to renovations committee; will be able to move soon at a more rapid pace. Timing: We need all the time we have (Jason). Need to get going soon. Jason has recommendation for architect.
- Hiring – We have completed 34 interviews so far, and we are getting some amazing applicants that represent a lot of diversity and experience. More interviews are scheduled for tomorrow. Once we know who we are hiring, we will invite the new employees to meet the board. We've already begun making some hiring decisions, because some applicants have been accepting jobs with other schools and we don't want to miss out on retaining excellent candidates. Contract date for new hires starts August 1, 2021.
- Budget – Once all the hiring is done, it will be helpful to have a time when we can all look at next year's budget together, since it will be very different from the past. Target for this meeting will be May.

C. Treasurer

Dawnya reported that we have just passed the halfway point in the budget year and she continues to have no concerns; everything is going well. She is eager to review numbers for next fiscal year as soon as those are available.

D. Faculty Representative

- Jonathan expressed gratitude that so many community members were supportive at the Q&A event on Monday. He urged us to have patience with the faculty as they make the reopening transition. Teachers will have to learn a new of teaching yet again and will be faced with the challenge of balancing between the demands of in-person and virtual learning. It's a model that has a lot of inherent complications and will take some time to adjust. He also expressed excitement to see students in person again: "For all the challenges, it will be really beautiful too."
- A question was raised regarding end-of-year testing and how that will go. The Biden Administration is asking that schools administer end-of-year tests, but they are leaving it up to the states to decide specifics, which we don't know yet. The school administered the ACT in person yesterday and it went very well; the students followed all safety precautions flawlessly, which was a great relief to the admins. The week before they administered the PSAT and it went well too. The

EOGs would likewise have to be in person tests, which will be more complex to coordinate.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Hawbridge Expansion Update (Little Diversified and Aspire Construction)

- Weather continues to be a concern. Because of unprecedented rain, the project is behind where it should be, likely by about two weeks.
- CT Wilson has let us know that they plan to request an extension due to rain delays, which they will likely get.
- Since we have no control over the weather, we are trying to take care of all the things we can control (building permits, materials acquisition, pre-fab gym is ready to go).
- Soil continues to be a concern. Experts continue to monitor the usability of the dirt on site, and the team is doing their best to keep economic risks to a minimum.
- Concrete crew is preparing to get started, excited to be pouring some concrete soon.

VIII. Adjourn – 7:27 p.m.