

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

Date: Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Location: Huth Commons, The Hawbridge School

- I. Call to Order – 6:03pm
- II. Roll Call
  - a. Attending Board Members:  
Natalya Barker (Chair), Kathryn Brown (Vice Chair), Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer), April Williams, Christina Fisher, Renee Lynch (Acting Secretary in Megan Glancy's absence), Davida Reid, and Todd Nicolet  
*Not Present:* Megan Glancy (Secretary)
  - b. Attending Executive Director and Faculty/Staff:  
Jennifer Shelton (Director), Emily Martin (Assistant Director), Matthew Bello (Assistant Director), Jonathan Farmer (Upper School Faculty Representative), and Kierca Kimbel (Lower School Faculty Representative)
- III. Approval of Agenda – The agenda was unanimously approved.
- IV. Public Comment
  - a. A parent noted that we should make every board meeting accessible to parents via Zoom in an effort to provide transparency.
  - b. A parent made a comment, on behalf of five families, in support of continued mask-wearing at Hawbridge.
  - c. There was public comment expressing a desire to hear the board speak on teacher retention and recruitment, as well as faculty support and appreciation.
  - d. A parent spoke in support of the mental health day that was given to the Upper School; however, this parent felt that this decision created more time alone for her child, away from peers, and created more isolation. She asked that we reimagine what a mental health day could be, perhaps as a day to be together socially without classes.
  - e. A parent expressed curiosity about who sets policies on mid-school admissions Board Chair Natalya Barker directed this parent to Jennifer Shelton (Director).
  - f. Several parents voiced concerns about uncertainty: Beyond the holidays, what is the plan to provide space for our Upper School students so that families are prepared?
  - g. Parents asked for the board to consider offering public comment after the construction crew speaks. There was expressed interest in a public forum or public Q&A. It was mentioned that the board should rethink ways to engage with parents and the community with restorative practices.

## V. Consent Items

- a. Approval of previous meeting's minutes – Dawnya Bohager (Treasurer) noted that she and fellow board member Renee Lynch were not recorded in attendance. The board approved the minutes unanimously with these revisions.
- b. Future Meeting – Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 6 p.m. This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom. Natalya Barker (Chair) noted that a hybrid meeting schedule (some virtual and some in-person) was adopted to be more transparent and accessible as a board. Discussion was opened about future meetings. Todd Nicolet mentioned tabling the discussion to gather information and to get more input: How can we be more open and accessible? What spaces and technology do we have available? Can we gather more information between now and our next meeting? Jonathan Farmer (Upper School Faculty Representative) offered to reach out to a teacher who has multi-directional microphones that could potentially be used to allow for livestreaming of in-person meetings. Todd has some experience in the field but suspects livestreaming may be cost-prohibitive. Jennifer Shelton (Director) mentioned that they have hybrid faculty meetings, but there is only one speaker in these meetings, whereas board meetings have multiple speakers.

## VI. Reports

- a. Board Chair (Natalya Barker)
  - i. Open House Sign-Up: Natalya asked that board members sign up for a time slot for Hawbridge's Open House (December 4) to attend as board representatives. The sign-up link is in the board's email.
  - ii. Focus Groups: Natalya reported that yesterday's focus group was successful and that the committee is sharing notes. One key takeaway is that we need to move forward with bringing in experts on collaborative leadership. A charge was presented for the board and admins to work together on this. In the focus group, there was a lot of feedback on teacher bonuses and compensation. Natalya noted that these conversations are happening, but they must be held in closed session because they are about contracts.
  - iii. Hiring for Lower School Director: The hiring process has begun for the Lower School Director position. Applications are due December 15. The board agrees that we need to create a process and a selection committee. Natalya recommends modeling it after the hiring process used when Kenny Moles was hired. Jonathan Farmer (Upper School Faculty Representative) said it came out in the focus group that "we are not giving administrators enough support." He says the timeline feels worrying. Faculty expressed a need for more urgent action. How can we

accelerate the process? Kathryn asked if there is precedent for PASTA representatives being involved in hiring committees. Should we revise the application deadline? Christina mentioned the logic of hiring someone to start after winter break—what does it mean to actually do that? What should the new deadline be? When can the selection committee begin reviewing resumes? Can we develop slots or sign-ups now for reviewing applicants and interviewing? Can we establish a “plan” to see if a decision can happen before the holidays? Does it make more sense to create the plan to interview and make a decision the first few weeks of January with a start date of February 1? Is there work in this process that teachers can do to help offer support to admins? Kathryn recommended nominating a “convenor” (Kathryn nominates herself). Board unanimously supports Kathryn for this position. Kathryn will get an email chain going to find who is interested and available. The committee will bring a pool of candidates to the full board: at least two viable candidates (but preferably three distinct candidates, i.e., candidates who offer unique and different approaches to the position). Jennifer Shelton (Director) will reach out to PASTA representative.

- b. Fundraising (Kathryn Brown) – The committee goal is to work more in partnership with PASTA. Christina Fisher (current board member) and Dianne Ford (former board member) have joined. Kathryn met with the chair of the PASTA fundraising committee. April and Kathryn attended the last PASTA meeting to find ways to collaborate. Todd noted that the hiring process may take precedent over scheduling future fundraising meetings at this time.
- c. Communications (April Williams) – With new information now available about the modular units, we need to revise the FAQs on the website and send out a new email. April requested that parents please send questions about the temporary classrooms to the board so that we can try to address them in the revised FAQs. The committee is working to create an abbreviated update from ASPIRE that can go out to the Hawbridge community regularly.
- d. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Christina Fisher) – Davida Reid and Christina Fisher (board members) met with Emily Martin (Assistant Director) yesterday. Emily presented stats on annual data of the student population from a racial and IEP perspective, and together they discussed how these factors influence diversity of the student population. This DEI group is trying to move toward a mission and vision statement. Christina started an email thread to craft this statement asynchronously.
- e. Directors – Jennifer Shelton (Director) is working on teacher involvement with decision making; one way is to provide info and gather input on the modular updates. Jennifer is gathering votes and feedback from Upper School faculty on next steps while we wait for the modular classrooms to be ready for occupancy.

Emily Martin (Assistant Director) created a transition committee with both Upper and Lower School representatives. This committee met to discuss ideas around the many transitions that are coming. Jennifer mentioned that open house for the Lower School is December 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. She is hoping for a February Upper School open house. Matt Bello (Assistant Director) says the Lower School is finding a “groove” and it is going well. He wants to commend the staff on their flexibility and hard work.

- f. Treasurer (Dawnya Bohager) – State and county funds are coming in, with the addition of federal funds coming in now as well, some from Covid relief money. Expenses: Total building expenses are only at 11%, because we are only operating one building. Dawnya asked about the marketing budget (\$2,000 per school): We have expended through to \$8000—what is included in this amount? Could something be coded incorrectly? Dawnya will look into this further with Jennifer Shelton (Director) and the school’s accountant. The trickling in of county money has helped make progress in our 90-day emergency reserve fund, but we have not met that goal yet, with a shortfall of \$300,000. This number is hard to pin down when we are considering operating expenses for both schools.
- g. Faculty – Kierca Kimbel (Lower School Faculty Representative) echoes Matt Bello’s positive sentiment: The Lower School has found a smooth rhythm, happy with new hires, who are settling in, and faculty has expressed a desire for more info about raises. Jonathan Farmer (Upper School Faculty Representative) acknowledges the hardships facing Upper School faculty; people are doing a wonderful job of caring for one another. Jonathan says, “We could work better to be a community.” He has seen a rise in hurtful communication to administrators and office management. He asks us to think about ways to support everyone; he noted that this might be a good time for a message from the board to the community about this.

## VII. Unfinished business

- a. Communications policy – A revised communications policy was introduced by Natalya Barker (Chair) and reviewed by the board. A motion was made to approve the revised language, was seconded, and was approved unanimously. April will update the policy manual and train Megan Glancy (Secretary) on maintaining the policy manual as secretary going forward.
- b. Mask policy – Todd shared that he spent time researching current expectations. Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recommendations are pegged through county transmission rates, and DPI governs charter schools. Todd asserted that in almost all cases, DPI’s recommendations are not something we question, so why would we question their practices on mask policies? CDC site says that Alamance is still in the very high range for transmission rates. Research on surrounding counties shows that mask policies are still in place. A motion was made to renew

for one month (until our next board meeting) the Hawbridge mask policy as it is currently written; the motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

- c. Modular Updates – Emily Martin (Assistant Director) advocated strongly with the county to allow us temporary occupancy in the modular classrooms, as a new requirement for parking and ADA accessibility is holding up the process. The county pushed it to state level, where the state level not only denied our request but enforced more requirements, including mandating ramps at 60% of the modular entrances/exits (the county only required ramps at 50%). Ben Culp (Aspire Construction Management) submitted the design for an ADA-compliant parking spot and is waiting for approval. Ben also submitted plans for temporary sidewalks instead of pouring concrete. We still need to get the water meter set; utility crew was a no show. Ben talked with county to discuss possibility of modular settling. If plans are accepted, it could be about a week's worth of work.
- d. Expansion Updates – The construction site is less prone to weather delays now. They are waterproofing exteriors, 50% of windows are in, brick showed up this week, masonry work will begin, and framing inspections have passed. Ben Culp (Aspire Construction Management) says latest schedule shows completion of date of February 15, 2022, but Ben says this is dependent on many factors, including material delays and weather. Kathryn Brown, Renee Lynch, and Emily Martin toured the site today. Kathryn will share photo and video updates.

VIII. New Business

- a. Audit Approval – There were no recommended corrective actions. Approved unanimously.

IX. Closed Session – Moved to closed session at 7:34 p.m.

- a. To Consider Confidential Matters Pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11 Subsection (a) – (5).

X. Return to Open Session and Adjourn – 9:45 p.m.