



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 26, 6:00 p.m.
Hawbridge Upper School Commons

I. Call to Order - 6:06 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members:

Natalya Barker, Christina Fisher, Megan Glancy, Joshua Horton, Renee Lynch (Vice Chair), Amanda Rose (Treasurer), April Williams (Chair)

Attending Directors and Faculty/Staff:

Cheryl Beierschmitt (Director of Lower School), Lora Wilder (Lower School Faculty Representative), Jenniffer McDuffie (Upper School Faculty Representative), Cameron Ratliff (Assistant Director of Business and Communications), Jennifer Shelton (Director of Upper School), Misty Myers (Exceptional Children Director)

Absent: Nick Harrison (Secretary), Davida Reid

III. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was passed unanimously.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of Previous Meetings' Minutes

Minutes from board meetings held on Sept. 28, 2022, and Oct. 17, 2022, were passed unanimously.

B. Future Meetings/Events

A. Williams proposed setting the board meeting calendar for the remainder of the year to make it easier for community members to know when the board will meet and to ensure the board's compliance with open meeting law. The board discussed the desire to return to in-person meetings, citing the benefit of more robust discussion and the value of in-person connection, while also wanting to preserve the ease and accessibility afforded by virtual meetings. It was noted that we presume virtual meetings are more accessible because of the larger number of parents in attendance online last year, but that may have been due to the challenges of the expansion and COVID, and virtual meetings are not necessarily more accessible for people who may not have access to high-speed internet. The board discussed the potential of a hybrid meeting—hosting meetings in person but also offering an online option—and the many challenges of this option were raised: needing the right equipment and technology, knowing what equipment to purchase, having someone who can oversee the online meeting, the issue of not having high-speed internet in the Upper School building yet, troubleshooting, etc. C. Fisher offered to research these questions further. To address the issue of accessibility now, the board decided to alternate in-person and virtual meetings throughout the year, with the exception of doing both the November and December meetings virtually to accommodate the holiday season and school breaks.

A motion to approve the following board meeting schedule was made and approved unanimously by the board.

Wednesday, November 30, 2022* (virtual)
Wednesday, December 14, 2022* (virtual)
Wednesday, January 25, 2022 (in person)
Wednesday, February 22, 2022 (virtual)
Wednesday, March 29, 2022* (in person)
Wednesday, April 26, 2022 (virtual)
Wednesday, May 24, 2022 (in person)
Wednesday, June 28, 2022 (virtual)

* An asterisk denotes a date that deviates from the usual fourth Wednesday of the month to accommodate breaks in the school calendar

VI. Reports

A. Directors

■ Lower School Director (C. Beierschmitt)

C. Beierschmitt acknowledged the vast support received from community members regarding the air remediation issues. The school is dealing with

the challenges well; faculty are responding with grace. She expressed gratitude for the work of parent volunteers, particularly those who made donations to replace materials and cover lunch shifts. The school has received updates regarding the report from the air quality professionals and approval to open classrooms that were temporarily closed as a precautionary measure; as a result, the 4th graders will now be able to move into more space on the lower level. C. Beierschmitt reported that she is continuing to talk with experts and follow their advice. Some remediation work should be completed over Thanksgiving break, and the timeline will be finalized from there. Parents and stakeholders will be notified when there is an update. The school continues to provide masks and accommodations for students until the air quality issue is resolved. Parent-teacher conferences were held Oct. 19-21 and were a success. The Lower School is hiring a new 4th grade teacher with input from several faculty members who have served on the hiring committee; we hope to have a final update regarding this hire soon. Playground planning is underway; some first steps are underway including a committee to inform the layout and benchmarks. The entire school faculty engaged in a half day of Peaceful Schools training on restorative practices as a follow-up to earlier previous professional development.

- Upper School Director (J. Shelton)

J. Shelton reported on the success of recent Peaceful Schools training for faculty. She expressed that another Peaceful Schools training will be offered for the community, including parents; more information regarding this opportunity will be communicated in coordination with PASTA. She shared about time faculty recently spent sharing a meal and building community, representing a valued tradition at Hawbridge. J. Shelton thanked PASTA for donations to both the Upper and Lower Schools. She reported that clubs are returning to the Upper School and that sports teams are doing very well and have been having fun. After expenses, volleyball earned over \$400.

- Assistant Director, Exceptional Children K-12 (M. Myers)

M. Myers shared information about the Exceptional Children's program: This year, of the 245 students at the Lower School, the EC program serves 20 students. At the Upper School, 43 students are served through the EC program, out of 332 total Upper School students. The EC program has two teachers at each school; other services are contracted out. For a year and a half, the school has been trying to hire a speech language pathologist; across the state, there is a deficit of providers. The company the school typically works with cannot find providers for the first time in

many years; however, the school is currently working on finalizing negotiations for hiring a provider of speech services through a different company. An audit of the EC program was conducted last year; areas of improvement were identified. After hiring the speech language pathologist, the school will have three items remaining to clear the audit; all areas for improvement are related to speech and language services. Another audit will be conducted in 3-5 years. M. Myers discussed how many students are identified for services and in need of services versus previous years due to many factors such as COVID.

B. Faculty Representatives

■ Lower School Representative (L. Wilder)

L. Wilder reported on the success of Hispanic Heritage month at the Lower School, which included activities and a dance performance by one of the first grade classes. This week is Spirit Week, which includes dressing up each day and wearing costumes on Halloween. L. Wilder acknowledged the contributions of a variety of stakeholders for the wonderful fall festival and expressed gratitude for the ability to build community even through adversity such as recent mold issues. She reported that the Lower School will recruit faculty for the strategic planning committee at the next faculty meeting.

■ Upper School Representative (J. McDuffie)

J. McDuffie reported on the upcoming start of clubs; sign-ups have been conducted from over 20 club options. Students have expressed interest and they should begin by next Thursday. Students are enjoying Spirit Week, including a costume contest on Monday afternoon. Parent-teacher conferences went well. Community members enjoyed being in the new building. Turnout was lower than last year, when virtual conferences were an option; J. McDuffie suggested that this difference in turnout should be considered for planning future events. Field trips and dances are coming up. The fall festival was wonderful and was well received by the community.

C. Board

■ Committee Updates

a) Fundraising (R. Lynch)

R. Lynch expressed gratitude for all the service and effort put into the fall festival and for the sense of community it helped to foster. The festival netted \$9500/ plus paypal payments of \$3060.63; donations continue to roll in and will hopefully keep up. We are at 37% of the total \$50,000 capital campaign goal. The committee is in discussions about future fundraising events, with more information to come. Donations are still needed, so the committee is continuing to discuss ideas for fundraising: The committee will draft a letter to businesses to solicit support; it is exploring donations from other organizations such as Impact Alamance; and it is exploring grants that Hawbridge may be eligible for and will create a living document for grant opportunities. C. Ratliff added that the school will send a One Call to solicit donations; a previous phone bank was not successful, with some parents being rude to student volunteers; thus the school is hesitant to do another phone bank. C. Ratliff also shared that a parent has offered to donate mulch and plants for the outdoor spaces.

b) Strategic Planning (C. Fisher)

C. Fisher reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met October 6, 2022, and is currently meeting twice per month. The committee was formed to revise the current strategic plan, which has been in effect for more than five years. The committee is preparing to gather input from various stakeholders. Outreach to faculty is underway. The committee sent an interest/volunteer form to parents and has received 29 responses; there were many comments in the open-ended question about families' experiences with Hawbridge. The committee has reviewed next steps and will finalize stakeholder groups and areas to focus the revision efforts.

D. Treasurer (A. Rose)

First quarter ended on September 30th. Year to date there are no concerns. We continue to track in a manner consistent with having a surplus of funds at the end of this period. The board discussed actual versus projected expenses; with the expectation of gas being somewhat high, all costs are as anticipated.

VII. Unfinished Business

A. Expansion Update (J. Shelton/C. Ratliff)

C. Ratliff reported that the loan closing on the Upper School building is coming up in November, with all major challenges taken care of. We will close for a lower

amount than originally anticipated, thus lowering our payments. Much of the savings will go to other services, such as landscaping. We will save nearly \$30,000 on insurance projection. We may need to purchase a vehicle to move trash from the Lower School to the quality dumpsters at the Upper School. The anticipated budget appears to have been well predicted and is on par with what is occurring. Wi-Fi has been backordered since March. C. Ratliff has been motivating the provider to speed the process up and hopes this is going to accelerate things. Card readers on the doors will be installed once Wi-Fi is available. J. Shelton expressed that Aspire Construction Management is wrapping up their work with us. C. Fisher inquired about the Wi-Fi and asked if AT&T can prioritize our case since we are a school and need the service for safety and functionality. C. Ratliff described the school's efforts to motivate AT&T to prioritize our case and shared alternatives that have been presented and expressed some hope that alternative equipment can be obtained to speed things up. C. Ratliff reported that discussion on enhancements to outdoor learning are underway.

VIII. New Business

A. 2022 Audit Report (A. Williams)

Chair A. Williams asked the board if they had reviewed the 2022 independent auditor's report. She reminded the board and those in attendance that the purpose of this report, as stated in the auditor's letter to the board, is "to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about The Hawbridge School's ability to continue as a going concern for twelve months beyond the financial statement date [which was June 30, 2022], including any currently known information that may raise substantial doubt shortly thereafter." A. Williams shared that while board members are free to read the report in its entirety, the most relevant page for our review and approval is the "Summary of Auditor's Results" beginning on page 55 of the report document. A. Williams noted that this summary shows that the auditor found no "material weaknesses," "significant deficiencies," or "noncompliance issues," which is what the board wants to see from an auditor's findings. A. Williams then called for a motion to approve the board's review of the auditor's report; the motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by the board.

B. Attorney Authorization (A. Williams)

A. Williams reported that the board works in collaboration with various attorneys to execute our duties to the school and that there are times when it would be helpful and more efficient for school directors to have direct access to these attorneys, with the board's authorization. The board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of authorizing such access, including how billing would then

be routed and paid. Legal fees are already a line item in the budget, so they would be paid by the school, much like other operating expenses. Invoices can go either to the school or to the board, depending on the issue covered. N. Barker noted that the attorneys are hired by and responsible to the board and there are no apparent liabilities or conflicts with allowing administrators open contact, as Hawbridge's attorneys' ultimate duty is representing the organization and as such they are burdened with the responsibility of avoiding conflicts of interest. Following discussion, A. Williams called for a motion to authorize Hawbridge Directors Jennifer Shelton, Cheryl Beierschmitt, and Cameron Ratliff to contact attorneys consulted and employed by the Hawbridge Board. The motion was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

IX. **Closed Session**

A motion was made to move into closed session to consider confidential matters pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11(a)(5). The motion was approved unanimously by the board. The meeting moved to closed session at 7:27 p.m. The board returned to open session at 7:45 p.m.

IX. **Adjourn** - 7:46 p.m.