



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

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 14, 6:00 p.m.  
Virtual

**I. Call to Order: 6:03PM**

**II. Roll Call**

Attending Board Members:

Natalya Barker, Christina Fisher, Megan Glancy, Nick Harrison (Secretary), Josh Horton, Renee Lynch (Vice Chair), Amanda Rose (Treasurer), April Williams (Chair)

Attending Directors and Faculty/Staff:

Gretchen Kapity (Lower School Faculty Representative), Jennifer McDuffie (Upper School Faculty Representative), Lynne Pierce (Assistant Director of Operations and Athletics), Jennifer Shelton (Director of Upper School)

Absent: Cheryl Beierschmitt (Director of Lower School)

**III. Approval of Agenda**

A motion to approve the proposed agenda as submitted was passed unanimously by the board. No additions or corrections were introduced.

**IV. Public Comment**

- A. April Williams announced the resignation of board member Davida Reid from the Hawbridge Board of Directors, effective December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In January 2023, the board will review the bylaws and discuss next steps in regard to the seat vacancy.

**V. Consent Items**

- A. Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Meeting minutes from the board's previous regularly scheduled meeting, held on

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, were approved unanimously. The approved minutes will be posted to the Hawbridge school website in the coming days.

B. Future Meeting: Wednesday, January 25, 2023 (In-Person)

The January board meeting will take place on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in-person and at the Lower School Huth Commons.

G. Kapity asked if all Spring 2023 board meetings are likely to be held at the Lower School. M. Glancy commented that it might be a good idea to rotate the location of the in-person board meetings between the Lower and Upper Schools so that board members and meeting attendees can spend time at both Hawbridge locations. R. Lynch commented that the air scrubbers introduced as part of the mold remediation are still present at the Lower School and might impede communication, although it is anticipated that these scrubbers will be removed entirely over the Winter Break.

N. Barker motioned that the January board meeting take place at the stated time in the Lower School Huth Commons, while alternating further in-person meetings between the Upper and Lower Schools. The location of the in-person meetings will be noted on the school website. The motion to alternate the location of the in-person board meetings between Upper and Lower Schools was approved unanimously.

## VI. Reports

A. Directors

- Lower School Director (J. Shelton on behalf of C. Beierschmitt)

The mold remediation effort progresses at the Lower School. The remediation will continue over Winter Break and is expected to conclude entirely before school resumes on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. The vendor reports that the air scrubbers which have been deployed in the Lower School will be removed by the first day of school. This will mark the end of the mold remediation effort.

The Lower and Upper Schools had the annual Open House on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, which traditionally has taken place on the same day as the Holiday Market. Several vendors were hosted in the Upper School gymnasium, and that increased foot traffic to the school for building tours. Several families were among these visitors. Student ambassadors led the tours through the Upper School. Some traffic was at the Lower School also during this time, with folks inquiring about the student lottery. The February Open House is approaching and typically this event is very popular, as it coincides with parents who are seriously considering

Hawbridge for the following school year.

- Upper School Director (J. Shelton)

J. Shelton addressed concerns that arose on the matter of school safety on the week of December 5th. The school has contracted with Peaceful Schools for the next two years, and these trainings will continue with teachers, students, and others, with the overall goal of building relationships to reinforce school safety. Although Hawbridge has grown in recent years, the administrators and faculty still know all of the students. J. Shelton asserted that research has shown that maintaining relationships between administrators and students helps to avoid safety incidents in schools.

On December 5th, rumors of a potential threat against the school began circulating among students. That night, a student went to the Hawbridge website and reported their concern via the "Say Something Anonymous Reporting System" (SS-ARS). Students (grades 6-12) and faculty are trained in use of this program every year. School administrators were contacted shortly afterward, and communication between school administration and the Alamance County Sheriff's Office took place to begin investigating the matter. Following a thorough investigation that took place throughout the night and into the morning, it was determined by both law enforcement and school administrators that no threat to the school was present. When school opened on December 6th, it became clear that rumors had also spread via social media and private messaging, which prompted a follow-up schoolwide email from administrators to address the safety concerns.

Students know to use SS-ARS in a number of scenarios when there is concern about another student (threats, self-harm, etc.). The "Say Something" reporting system is provided by a third-party and is staffed 24/7 by specially trained personnel. When a concern is reported via SS-ARS, predetermined contacts at the school are then notified regardless of the time of day. The SS-ARS is the quickest, most responsible way to report concerns of a threat against the school. School administrators are trained to answer these calls. The link <http://thehawbridgeschool.org/ss-ars/> describes this service further.

The resulting discussions at the Upper School have involved a review of the proper way to report so that the right people are notified; how to be responsible with reporting; and ultimately viewing this as a teachable moment for future preparedness and what people ought to do if they have concerns.

While most of the focus is on prevention, the school has also participated for many years in the "ALICE" Training (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate). Recently, Director of Operations Lynne Pierce completed a "train-the-trainer" ALICE course, and at the start of the 2023 semester, training for faculty will be conducted on how to respond to a serious violent threat.

The school is regularly audited on these matters to ensure accountability. The NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) confirms that the school is practicing emergency preparedness training (fire drills, tornado drills, etc.). Hawbridge is also regularly in contact with the Alamance County Sheriff's Office and emergency services to confirm what steps to take in the event of a safety issue.

R. Lynch expressed appreciation to the Hawbridge administration for their handling of this matter and keeping the community informed. M. Glancy also expressed appreciation to the Hawbridge administration and added that several parents were grateful for the communication that went out to the school that morning, which relayed the findings of the investigation.

J. Shelton commented that the event was a great reflection of the new collaborative leadership model at Hawbridge, with multiple people working on the matter in their respective areas instead of a single individual trying to do everything.

Lastly, J. Shelton reported that Internet service has been fully activated at the Upper School, along with student wireless. A parent volunteer who specializes in IT assisted with the rollout of the network connectivity, and both J. Shelton and board members expressed gratitude for that volunteer's efforts.

## B. Faculty Representatives

- Lower School Representative (G. Kapity/L. Wilder)

G. Kapity shared that Spirit Week is underway, which adds some fun and excitement to the last week of school before Winter Break.

Monday (December 12th) was Hat Day, where kids could bring in monetary donations to benefit a Hawbridge community member who is battling an illness. This event raised over \$650. Other events coming up are the Spelling Bee on January 11th; many students have been working with Mr. Cunningham to practice for that. The Instructional Council is

working on plans for Black History Month and Earth Day. In January, there will be talks to form an Earth Day Committee to create something collaboratively between the Upper and Lower Schools. For the Earth Day event, a Hawbridge family has offered to hold a recycling event.

G. Kapity commented that everyone is thrilled that the fourth graders have been able to return to their classrooms after the mold remediation effort. As an example, G. Kapity shared a story about a young student who lost a beloved stuffed animal (a beaver) two months ago. After a long search, it was thought to be gone forever. However, when the affected classrooms were opened back up, a fourth grader recognized the missing stuffed animal sitting in the classroom, and the beaver was returned to its owner.

- Upper School Representative (K. Kimbel/J. McDuffie)

J. McDuffie reported that the Heron STEM Club has been collecting soda tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House, and they are hoping to collect those through January 11th. Hawbridge Helpers is wrapping a separate collection for the Ronald McDonald House for toys, household goods, and little presents to go under the Christmas tree for families. Saxapahaw Studies students are creating holiday cards to deliver to assisted living homes in Alamance County, and those should be sent on the week of December 12th.

The end of the semester has brought many activities happening at the Upper School. With the help of Ms. Osborne, Student Council has conducted a blood drive, and numerous faculty and students donated blood. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Farmer, *Poetry Out Loud* has returned after a hiatus of several years due to the pandemic, and this event went very well. Students enjoyed hearing their classmates present selected and memorized poems, and a panel of judges determined the winner of the contest. This year's winner of *Poetry Out Loud* was 10th grader Ansel Juhlin, who will now have the chance to present at the state level competition. The Upper School students are enjoying Spirit Week, which includes Ugly Sweater Day and Pajama Day. A student dodgeball event is taking place on Friday afternoon for the purpose of raising money for a Gaga Ball pit.

J. McDuffie expressed gratitude to PASTA for a lovely holiday event on December 12th that featured appetizers and decorations for the school staff. The faculty also very much appreciates all the donations and efforts from the parents and community that went into putting on that event.

## C. Board

- Committee Updates

- a) Fundraising (R. Lynch)

R. Lynch reported that the Fundraising Committee has not met in the past two weeks. The committee will reconvene in January to continue the grant writing research effort that was ongoing prior to the Capital Campaign.

While not related to the Fundraising Committee, R. Lynch also commented that the Board Selection Committee will convene in late January 2023. Four board members will be needed to complete the selection process. Committee members must be selected by February 15th. R. Lynch will chair the committee and will reach out to faculty representatives for input on this process. This has been done in years past. The Chair of PASTA or designee will also be asked for input on the process.

- b) JEDI (M. Glancy)

M. Glancy reported that the JEDI Committee met on December 6th to learn that Chair D. Reid was resigning from the board. The leadership, efforts, and initiatives of the JEDI Committee will be surveyed to determine next steps.

- c) Strategic Planning (C. Fisher)

C. Fisher reported that the Strategic Planning Committee met on December 1st and plans a second meeting on December 15th. In preparation for the sub-team work, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee sent an initial email to those parents that expressed interest in participation with this effort.

Parental involvement and sub-team work is expected to begin in the latter half of January. The sub-teams will meet approximately six times, and the administrators assigned to facilitate a given sub-team will synthesize team output and then forward it onto the Strategic Planning Steering Committee to synthesize it further and incorporate it into a refreshed Hawbridge strategic plan. In April or May, this plan will be brought back to the larger community.

- D. Treasurer (A. Rose)

A. Rose reported that Hawbridge is 42% (or 5/12ths) of the way through the fiscal year. No expense concerns to report. The impact of the mortgage, which was

finalized in November 2022, is now incorporated into the budget. The school is expected to set aside \$300,000 less this fiscal year due to the later-than-expected closing date of the loan and the higher interest rates that have resulted.

**VII. Closed Session**

Motion to move into closed session at 6:43PM. Motion passed unanimously.

A. To Consider Confidential Matters Pursuant to NC G.S. §143-318.11(a)(1)

The board returned to open session at 7:23PM.

**VIII. Adjourn: 7:24PM**

The board unanimously approved a motion to adjourn at 7:24PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nick Harrison (Secretary)