



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

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

Lower School - Huth Commons

I. Call to Order – 6:00 PM

II. Roll Call

Attending Board Members:

Renee Lynch (Chair), Ted Teague (Vice Chair), Amanda Rose (Treasurer), Josh Horton (Secretary), Sara Abernethy, Megan Glancy, Kemp Watson-Ormond, Dylan Bondy

Attending School Directors and Faculty Representatives:

Jennifer Shelton (Upper School Director), Cameron Ratliff (Interim Lower School Director, Assistant Director: Business and Communications (K-12)), Lora Wilder (Lower School Faculty Representative), Kierca Kimbel (Upper School Faculty Representative)

III. Approval of Agenda

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting's agenda was unanimously approved.

IV. Public Comment

Parent of 3rd and 6th grade student spoke concerning the circumstances of withdrawing their 6th grader.

Steckley Lee spoke regarding the exit of female students from the school, and asked that the Board consider why this is happening. She also read a letter from another parent, Laura Dylan, which was emailed to the Board and is annexed unto these minutes.

Parent of a 1st and 3rd graders shared her concerns about her children's physical and mental safety. Parent was concerned that discipline issues impact safety and learning journey.

Andrew Macman 3rd and 6th grade parent. Daughter impacted by disciplinary incidents. Concerns have been expressed to administration, and his concerns were made greater by his conversation. He also concerned that Hawbridge may have issues with Title IX with the departure of female students from 6th grade.

R.Lynch thanked the parents who shared comments.

V. Consent Items

A. Approval of Previous Meetings' Minutes.

Upon a motion duly seconded, the Board unanimously approved the November 2023 minutes.

B. Future Meeting: Upon a motion duly seconded, the Board approved Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 6:00 PM as the next Board Meeting.

VI. Reports

A. Directors (J. Shelton/C. Ratliff)

The Directors' combined written report is annexed unto these minutes. Of special note is that an Exceptional Students teaching assistant has been hired, with 20 years experience.

D.Bondy asked about the outreach to Spanish-speaking parents, is there someone on hand to answer/translate. C.Ratliff said yes, and that there are programs being developed in parallel to address.

M.Glancy asking about the behavioral referral numbers. Can multiple referrals refer to a single person? J.Shelton answered affirmatively.

B. Faculty Representatives

■ Lower School Representative (L. Wilder)

The teachers in the Lower School appreciate our school calendar and enjoyed a restful full week off in the month of November. We recognize that not all schools have such a long break and want to be sure to acknowledge that we are grateful for that time.

The IC representatives are still making plans for Black History Month. James Shields is a gifted actor, singer, musician and historian and is the Director of the Alamance County African-American Cultural Arts and History Center. He spoke to the children last year with a focus on local history, specifically the Underground Railroad and mill for the Lower School and Frederick Douglass for the Upper School. This year he is developing a historical presentation that is more music based. We are also looking into some Artist in Residence programs for next year.

Our December IC meeting will be a time to celebrate the end of 2023 with a staff gathering. PASTA will provide food for us and those that would like to do so are participating in a Secret Snowflake gift exchange.

The Lower School has a fun-filled Spirit Week planned December 11-15. Many classes are learning about winter traditions around the world.

We are continuing our Monday Morning School-Wide Circle meetings. Each week a different class gets to share what they are learning. It is an opportunity

for school-wide Social and Emotional connection and community building across grades K-6.

We look forward to more Peaceful Schools training in January.

■ **Upper School Representative** (K. Kimbel)

The Upper School Faculty would like to express gratitude to PASTA for the wonderful spread provided at the holiday staff party yesterday.

Virginia Danford has been working on casting for the Upper School spring play, the Wizard of Oz. The cast list was posted on Monday. Virginia has also been working with 5th graders to prepare for a performance of “A Christmas Carol” tomorrow at 4:30 at the Upper School stage, preceded by a bake sale at 4 pm in the Upper School Commons.

Tomorrow the Upper School will be participating in Poetry Out Loud organized by Mr. Farmer. Poetry Out Loud will take place during bridge.

Jennifer and I have been working together to plan for our upcoming Extended Learning Days in January. We will be following a modified schedule for two days—January 8th and 9th—which will allow for longer class periods. This does not affect arrival or dismissal times, but allows teachers to do more enrichment activities that would usually exceed the regular allotted class period time.

Everyone is looking forward to the holiday break!

C. Board

■ **Committee Updates**

a) **Governance** (R. Lynch) Committee met December 12. The majority of our work falls under the two new business items on our agenda, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

In addition to this, the Committee reviewed and discussed the crossing guard information shared by April Williams. Admin agreed that the cost is too great and this contracted work would not meet the greater safety need. Next steps are to reach out to the SaxForward group to determine progress on pedestrian signage/crosswalk light.

Committee also touched on next steps for conducting our directors’ evaluations. A mid-year check-in has been scheduled for later this week.

b) **Strategic Planning** (S. Abernethy). The Committee met December 5, and the next meeting is virtual, on January 17. We’ve been considering feedback from Faculty survey. This month, I spoke to three 10th grade civics classes and got good feedback. Their issues were similar to issues that teachers have – creating a school culture,

ownership of space, love opportunities for athletics, discussions of diversity, lunch, and transportation. There is interest in music classes and more AP classes. Behavior issues came up, that 7th graders act differently than older students. Students proposed that Lower School students could have Upper School student mentors.

I also met with PASTA to discuss fundraising. The “no fuss” fundraiser is coming up, and then we hope to have a Spring fundraising event to go along with the Fall event we have.

I met with Finance committee to discuss fundraising, as well.

c) **Board Selection** (K. Watson-Ormond) The Committee has not met since the last Board Meeting. We hope to coordinate a meeting soon, now that a PASTA rep has been added to the Committee per the bylaws.

d) **Finance** (C. Ratliff for J. Buck) The Committee identified a member of public to potentially join the Committee per its charter.

We considered need for more land for athletics and gardening, preferably within walking distance or a few minute’s drive in school.

The Committee discussed the 25th Anniversary celebration in 2024, hopefully with some fundraising opportunity available, and pairing up with PASTA for fundraising.

We discussed budget items, including teacher salaries, and ensuring that they are competitive.

The Hawbridge accountant advised the Committee that there’s an amount of money that could be invested to yield dividend. We discussed how to approach that possibility and appointed a lead person to investigate options.

e) **Hiring** (R. Lynch)

The Committee is working to hire permanent Lower School Director. The position was posted before Thanksgiving. 9 applicants to date, the Committee has been reviewing the applications and will meet in January to discuss.

■ **Treasurer** (A. Rose) We were 42 percent of the way through the school year as of November 30th. Approximately 37 percent of revenue and 41 percent of total non-surplus expenses have been recognized to date. The working budget now projects the surplus for the year to be approximately \$16K; the increase from the prior month expectation is primarily attributable to the Title VI Federal Funds allotment being roughly \$22K higher than budgeted.

The working budget has not yet been updated to include revised expectations around technology and legal costs, both of which have exceeded initial budgeted amounts.

I do not have any financial concerns to report to the board through November 30th.

VII. New Business

- A. Parents Bill of Rights Policies. R.Lynch discussed that Donna Rascoe (Hawbridge Counsel) drafted policies pursuant to North Carolina SB 49 "Parents Bill of Rights". R.Lynch asked that the Board take until early next week to review and get comments. M.Glancy is uncomfortable about having to adopt these policies, and asked about how these policies reflect our values. R. Lynch also shared that faculty have shared how they are uncomfortable with these policies. T.Teague said we can consider (1) at the meeting, we could have statements from Board Members, Community, etc. (2) consider in our motion adopting it, recognizing that we are voting for this because we recognize that the law compels us to do so, that we will follow but do not endorse them, (3) attach to each policy a preamble statement that makes it clear that the policy is adopted pursuant to state law. R.Lynch said that the policies need to be adopted by January 1st, and the Board will hold Special Session(s) in advance of that date for discussion and adoption.
- B. Retention/Promotion Policy Update. R.Lynch discussed that this policy did not cover K-3 and therefore needs to be updated. Upon a motion duly seconded, the amended policies were unanimously adopted as the policy of the Board. The policy as amended is annexed unto these minutes.

VII. Closed Session

- A. To Consider Confidential Matters Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(1) and N.C.G.S. § 115C-402

Upon a motion duly seconded, the Board unanimously voted to move into closed session at 7:02 PM.

Upon a motion duly seconded, the Board unanimously voted to return to open session at 8:20 PM.

VIII. Adjourn

Upon a motion duly seconded, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:21 PM.



The Association for the Advancement of Education, DBA, The Hawbridge School
Directors' Monthly Board Report
December 13, 2023

Enrollment

20-day ADM: 600

Grade Level	Active Enrollment		Withdrawals since last board meeting	2024-2025 applications (Lottery opened November 1)
Kindergarten	33		0	35
1st grade	33		0	10
2nd grade	34		0	11
3rd grade	35		0	11
4th grade	42		0	5
5th grade	44		1	12
6th grade	39		2	8
7th grade	58		0	8
8th grade	47		1	9
9th grade	56		1	15
10th grade	67		2	2
11th grade	62		0	5
12th grade	40		0	1
Total	590		7	132

Personnel

New hire: EC teaching assistant

Dean of Students Report

Attendance

Month	Attendance letters sent	Attendance meetings held	Attendance contracts issued
August	2	0	0
September	42	2	0
October	57	7	0
November	33	3	0
December	27	5	2
January			
February			
March			
April			
May			
Total			

Behavior

Month	In School Suspension	Out of School Suspension	Behavior Referrals LS/US
August	0	0	12 / 4
September	1	3	11 / 29
October	2	1	11 / 17
November	0	0	30 / 13
December	2	1	16 / 12
January			
February			

March			
April			
May			
Total			

Business and Operations Report

We are still working out wrinkles with our new security system, which has prevented full utilization of the functions – though the cameras work and the key cards are providing proper locking and teacher authorization. If any member has questions, please feel free to reach out to Cameron or Lynne.

The fire suppression system installation at the Lower School is on track to be completely finished by the new year.

Red Dirt Design/Build has offered to collaborate with us on our playground to provide additional installations at a reduced labor rate. They are working on their design proposal before starting work this winter to add more equipment and to stabilize the slope on the river side of the lot.

We will hold our second open house for the lottery on 2/6, 530-730. We are advertising again on 102.1 and adding 101.1 to appeal to a more diverse range of families. Our REI team has weighed in on these choices, and Mrs. Underwood is helping this year with Spanish language translation and support in communicating with Spanish speaking families.

Important Dates for Next Month:

December 18 - January 1: Winter Break (no school)

January 15: Holiday (no school)

January 16: Teacher Workday (no school for students); Peaceful Schools follow-up training for teachers

CURRENT

Promotion and Retention Policy

Middle School

Middle school students who are struggling academically may be considered for retention. A variety of factors will be considered when making such a decision, including but not limited to:

- Number of classes the student has passed versus failed;
- The presence of external social/emotional factors;
- The presence of an IEP or 504 plan;
- Standardized testing results (both achievement and ability);
- The student's chronological age;
- Input from the student's parent/guardian(s);
- Input from the student's teachers;
- Potential for success in courses at the next level; and
- Short- and long-term impact of the decision on the student.

High School

- To be promoted from 9 th grade to 10 th grade, you must pass English I or English I Honors and earn at least 5 credits.
- To be promoted from 10 th grade to 11 th grade, you must pass English II or English II Honors and earn at least 10 credits.
- To be promoted from 11 th grade to 12 th grade, you must pass English III, English III Honors, or AP English Language & Composition and earn at least 15 credits.

PROPOSED ADDITION

Elementary School

Elementary School students who are struggling academically may be considered for retention. A variety of factors will be considered when making such a decision, including but not limited to:

- The presence of external social/emotional factors;
- The presence of an IEP or 504 plan;
- Standardized testing results (both achievement and ability);
- The student's chronological age;
- Input from the student's parent/guardian(s);
- Input from the student's teachers;
- Potential for success in courses at the next level; and
- Short- and long-term impact of the decision on the student.

December 13, 2023

Hello Hawbridge Board,

I'm sorry I can't speak with you all directly this evening. It is my older son's birthday today and we are having a special dinner with his grandparents tonight.

I did feel called to lend my thoughts to this meeting though when I heard that some other 6th grade parents are requesting a gathering to discuss discipline practices in the Lower School, especially for 5th and 6th grade families.

I have a son in 6th grade who struggles with impulsivity and focus in a pretty big way. He also has a diagnosed learning disability in written expression. Hawbridge has been a wonderful environment for him in many ways. I am so grateful for the teachers, administrators and the whole community that make him feel welcome, included, capable and worthy.

At the same time, the last few years in the Lower School have been pretty tumultuous and this year has continued to bring a lot of intense drama and conflict between students and between students and teachers from what I hear. Drama certainly comes with the territory of teaching a bunch of spirited 10-12 year olds and it is part of the social world, which kids this age are thoroughly exploring and fascinated by.

The restorative process for responding to conflict and social problem solving is a powerful tool that enhances these opportunities for social learning. While many schools talk about restorative process these days, I believe that Hawbridge takes it more seriously and tries to incorporate it more deeply into school culture. I value and appreciate that very much.

My son has participated in several restorative circles over the last two years. At their best, the circles seem very effective for building empathy and mutual understanding, for mending relationships and being able to move forward together in a small community. As the classic "bull in a China shop", my son really benefits from the opportunity for structured apologizing, making amends and hearing others' points of view.

But other times the circles seem more like a formality and that the behaviors that created the conflict are not really addressed in a consistent way. I've been hearing about students who have left the school over the last two years - primarily girls - because they have not felt safe at Hawbridge. My own son often tells us about other students harassing him and their behavior not being taken seriously. He has talked all year about social studies, in particular, as a class where there is a lot of disrespect between students and teacher and a level of chaos that makes learning impossible.

Kids are so influenced by other kids. I know my son's choices degenerate when he sees other students "getting away" with rude, mean and disruptive behavior. He loses respect for the system that's bringing everyone together and he is also the kind of guy who will jump on the bandwagon of chaos as often as not. While nothing changes overnight, it seems like there have to be some additional strategies to confront persistent aggression, bullying, and disruption in the classroom.

As a parent I would welcome the opportunity to partner with the school community to address these issues.

Thank you for all you do for our community.

Maura Dillon