



BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING – MINUTES – JUNE 20, 2023  
 713 WASHINGTON STREET  
 HOBOKEN, NJ 07030

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 7:04 by Mark Silberberg.
2. **Reading of the Open Public Meeting Statement**

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed and acted upon. This is a public meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Hoboken Charter School. At the public meeting, action will be taken on a variety of motions.

In accordance with the requirements of the Sunshine Law, the meeting was announced June 30, 2022 via notification to City Hall, the City Clerk’s Office on Washington Street, *the Bergen Record*, *The Hudson Reporter* and the *Jersey Journal*.

**Roll Call**

TRUSTEE	PRESENT	ABSENT
John Berger	X	
Lauren Calmas	X	
Amanda Grant		X
Grace Guandique	X	
Lisa McIntyre	X	
Kelly Pansy	X <sup>a</sup>	
Christine Sheedy		X
Mark Silberberg	X	
Joy Wheeler		X
Dana Wissing	X	

- Deirdra Grode, Executive Director
- Steve Literati, CFO and Board Secretary and Board Treasurer
- Lizzie Palma, Principal K-8
- Joanna Weintraub, Principal 9-12
- Jodi Howlett, Board Attorney
- Jeff Tennenbaum, President of Friends of HCS
- Yaphet Smallwood, Vice President, Friends of HCS
- Raina Fernandes
- Leslie Norwood
- Lauren Williams
- Janice Williams

<sup>a</sup>Left meeting at 7:40.

**3. Acceptance of Minutes for May 9, 2023**

Minutes of the previous public special Board meeting held on May 9, 2023, are available for review and/or correction and acceptance. Motion for HCS Board of Trustees to accept the minutes of the Hoboken Board of Trustees Meeting that took place on May 9, 2023.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

TRUSTEE	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
John Berger		X			
Lauren Calmas	1	X			
Amanda Grant					X
Grace Guandique				X	
Lisa McIntyre	2	X			
Kelly Pansy				X	
Christine Sheedy					X
Mark Silberberg		X			
Joy Wheeler					X
Dana Wissing		X			

**4. Public comment/questions on agenda items for the meeting**

A 15-minute period of time is provided for the public to ask questions on agenda items or make statements to the Board of Trustees. If there are many speakers, the chair will ask for a 3-minute speaking limit per speaker. The Board may extend the public comment portion by motion if necessary.

A parent expressed her thoughts on a grade her child received.

**5. Finance**

5.1 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approved the Board Secretary and Treasurer’s Reports for May 2023, as per the attached; and pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a), the Hoboken Charter School Board of Trustees secretary’s certification, and after review of the monthly financial report (appropriations section) certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, as of May 31, 2023, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(b), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the school’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year. (Attached schedules.)

5.2 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the bills list from May 5, 2023 to June 14, 2023. (attached.)

5.3 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the following payrolls:

Date	Amount
May 15, 2023	\$161,957.51
May 31, 2023	\$166,402.07

5.4 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the Memo of Understanding covering financial responsibilities and accounting for the HVAC project with the Friends of Hoboken Charter School (attached.)

- 5.5 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the acceptance of \$6,660 from the New Jersey Climate Change Pilot grant, awarded on May 12, 2023.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

TRUSTEE	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
John Berger		X			
Lauren Calmas		X			
Amanda Grant					X
Grace Guandique		X			
Lisa McIntyre		X			
Kelly Pansy	2	X			
Christine Sheedy					X
Mark Silberberg		X			
Joy Wheeler					X
Dana Wissing	1	X			

**6. Board Miscellaneous**

Jeff Tannenbaum, president of the Friends of Hoboken Charter School, provided an end of year update on Friends’ initiatives.

**7. Resolution of Appreciation**

WHEREAS, the Friends of Hoboken Charter School – including its leadership, gala committee, class parents, teachers’ appreciation coordinator, and special event sponsors/hosts -- volunteered their time and energy to plan and implement a wide variety of initiatives – including an innovative, major gala/auction – to raise money for HCS, bring the HCS community together, and express appreciation for HCS teachers and staff during a time when retaining our talented teachers remains a top priority; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Tannenbaum will be stepping down from Friends leadership at the conclusion of this school year, after assuming a leadership role for two years, and Cindy Wiegand will be stepping down from Friends leadership after two years in a leadership role; and Yaphet Smallwood will be stepping down after one year in a leadership role; and

WHEREAS, under the leadership of Jeff Tannenbaum, in his role as President of the FoHCS this past school year, the resources needed to achieve the aforementioned initiatives were attained and motivated, charter school advocacy was promoted, the FoHCS website was transitioned to a new platform, and new ideas were introduced to increase community engagement, such as weekly FoHCS emails, meetings with parents in each grade, and an HCS merchandise store; and

WHEREAS, Cindy Wiegand, in her role as Secretary of the FoHCS, thoroughly captured the minutes of every FoHCS meeting and finalized them quickly to ensure they were communicated to the HCS community in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, Yaphet Smallwood, in his role as Vice President of the FoHCS, supported Friends’ initiative implementation and additionally played the leading role in developing the Friends’ e-commerce site which established another source of fundraising for the School; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hoboken Charter School Board of Trustees recognizes and extends our utmost appreciation to the Friends of Hoboken Charter School for the efforts outlined above, which have had a positive impact on the HCS community this school year, and to Jeff Tennenbaum, Yaphet Smallwood and Cindy Wiegand for their time, commitment, and leadership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution of Recognition and Appreciation be duly recorded and saved in the permanent minutes of the Hoboken Charter School Board of Trustees on this 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month of June in the year 2023.

**8. Personnel**

- 8.1 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves Allyson Latini as Teacher for the 2023-2024 school year, subject to completion of a county sub-license, certification and/or criminal background check.
- 8.2 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves Amy Spina as Social Worker for the 2023-2024 school year, subject to completion of a county sub-license, certification and/or criminal background check.
- 8.3 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves Eunice Roman as Administrative Assistant for the 2023-2024 school year, subject to completion of a county sub-license, certification and/or criminal background check.
- 8.4 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the rehiring of Deirdra Grode as Hoboken Charter School Executive Director for the 2023-2024 school year.
- 8.5 Resolved, that the Board of Trustees approves the professional development for Jennifer Tarangelo, Teacher, to attend the Comprehensive Orton-Gillingham Plus virtual session from July 17–21, 2023. The total cost is \$1550.

**ROLL CALL VOTE**

TRUSTEE	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
John Berger	2	X			
Lauren Calmas	1	X			
Amanda Grant					X
Grace Guandique		X			
Lisa McIntyre		X			
Kelly Pansy					X
Christine Sheedy					X
Mark Silberberg		X			
Joy Wheeler					X
Dana Wissing		X			

**9. Enrollment**

As of June 20, 2023

Grade	Enrolled Students
K	22
1	23 (overenrolled)
2	22
3	22

4	22
5	22
6	23
7	21
8	22
9	25
10	27
11	22
12	24
Total Students Enrolled	297
Total Funded Students	296

**10. Executive Director’s School Report**

The HCS Community Art Show provided a beautiful opportunity to see Hoboken Charter School’s mission of learner-centered practices grounded in principles of social justice and social action through a gallery of student work. Through this event, our community members saw the progression of our art program starting with our youngest students who are learning the fundamentals of art and entering a multi-year, mission-aligned experience where they will develop a sophisticated aesthetic sense; explore their own identities; reflect on the experiences of themselves and others through art; find their style, perspective and voice; and use art as a tool for social change. The culmination of this learning experience was notably visible in the work of the students in our upper grades. For those of you who could not attend, please take a look at this enclosed video highlighting our students’ work. I want to thank Ms. Sanchez, our fabulous K-12 Art Teacher, who planned this event and supports our students in finding and sharing their unique perspective and voice, harnessing their creativity and developing and honing their technique.

The HCS community is celebrating LGBTQ+ Pride Month through a variety of activities designed to be meaningful and developmentally appropriate for all of our students. In June, all of our K-12 students have been exploring the rationale and significance of this commemorative month. Our youngest students celebrate the diversity of families and identities, take pride in what their unique family looks like and learn about people's right to love who they love and their agency to make choices including how they identify and express themselves. As our students enter the later elementary through upper school years, students recommit to being an ally and upstander and learn about notable members of the LGBTQ community and historical events that have supported or hindered the advancement of the rights of LGBTQ people. Activities include read-alouds by teachers and administrators and accompanying learning tasks (K-12), current event studies (5-12), our first PRIDE Month student-led coffeehouse (9-12), our first LGBTQ+ Studies course student-led Spirit Week (information is attached) (9-12) and Drag Queen Story Hour with Harmonica Sunbeam (K-4). I am particularly excited to share that for the first time, the HCS community will create a collaborative art piece with contributions from the members of our K-12 students and staff to reflect recent learning as well as our school community's pledge to inclusivity, allyship, advocacy and the celebration of our diverse identities. This permanent display will ultimately be visible to our whole community so all members feel seen, heard and supported and will serve as a representation of our school's expectation for all members of our community to honor and celebrate diversity and seek opportunities to be an ally, upstander and social justice advocate and champion. I shared an email with the community asking for partnership with the families through engagement in conversations with their child(ren) about the importance of individuals feeling free to be themselves without fear of judgment or punishment and underscore why it is our responsibility to be allies and upstanders in the face of unfair treatment. I shared an article to support these conversations as well.

K-12 families were sent a survey requesting how the School can most effectively communicate and work with

families in partnership to provide a world-class, mission-driven experience for all our students.

HCS Middle School and Upper School Green Ambassadors worked together with Sra. Ortiz and Ms. Touri at the Riverview Community Garden planting, weeding, composting, observing the active beehives and giving tours of the garden.

HCS applied for a Climate Awareness Education Grant via the NJDOE and received \$6,660 that will be put toward increasing labs supporting this mission-aligned academic work.

Across America, people Wear Orange on June 2- National Gun Violence Awareness Day- to honor victims and survivors of gun violence and call attention to this crisis that takes 120 lives every single day. HCS students and staff across K-12 wore orange in that shared message.

Our monthly scheduled Professional Development time is critical for our K-12 team to engage in professional growth to deliver a world class education at HCS. Earlier this month, teachers shared with one another examples of success stories in their classes around our mission-aligned work. Teachers shared exciting learner-centered and interage experiences their students engaged in this year grounded in principles of social justice and service-learning. As a team, we discussed challenges and opportunities to explore to enhance our mission work for the 2023-2024 school year.

HCS K-12 parents were invited to attend a session with Maria Sanders, LSW and PCI Certified Parent Coach, about Navigating Screen Time, Social Media and Gaming. The session was well-attended on our rooftop. We hope to work with Ms. Sanders again in the future.

Students from the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools in the Wisdom in Practice group celebrate AAPI month while practicing teamwork, collaboration and listening skills by making Asian inspired lanterns which symbolize good luck, health, prosperity and fortune.

Thanks to our 8th graders who donated a beautiful sign to HCS as their Class Gift to the school. This new sign reflects the evolution of our program underscoring the mission and that we are a K-12 community.

3rd graders wrote persuasive essays and worked with 11th graders to create accompanying posters persuading others to think about the dangers of smoking, deforestation, water pollution and unsafe online behaviors.

Following a successful volleyball season, upper school students had a pep rally with cheers from their classmates and a cross-division cheer squad.

## **11. Lower/Middle School Report**

Congratulations to all the students in "Girls on the Run" in grades 3-5 who completed their 5K on Saturday, May 13 in Sparta and absolutely crushed it! All of the girls pushed themselves to the finish and we are so proud of them and all of the hard work they put in this season! Thank you to their advisors Ms. Davidson, Ms. Tarangelo and Ms. Rogan for their hard work to prepare the girls! Students in the club finished their program with a community impact project to help keep Hoboken clean.

Also on Saturday, May 13 Lower School students in the HCS Bollywood after school club performed two dance numbers at the Shehnaaz Dance Academy Spring Showcase as one of 16 groups from around New Jersey.

On Wednesday, May 17 students in the Green Bosses Mission Lab listened to a dynamic presentation from The

North Bergen Purr, a volunteer TNR Feral Cat Program. They learned how they trap, neuter, vaccinate and return feral and abandoned cats safely back to their colonies and local neighborhood.

Congratulations to our Middle School bands for their hard work to prepare for and strong performance at the High Notes Music Festival on Friday, May 19. The 7/8 and Jazz Bands each received a designation of "Excellent" and our 5/6 band received "Exemplary." A huge thank you to Mr. Gavarny for his dedication to our music program and for planning a wonderful trip for students. We are excited for families to hear our Middle School bands and Lower School bands/choruses during Summer Gathering in a few weeks.

Theresa Howard and Kevin Timmons from the Hoboken Family Alliance met with the fourth graders on Tuesday, May 23 to speak about the Hoboken Bike Camp, which takes place annually to teach individuals with disabilities in the community how to ride a bicycle. The class selected Hoboken Bike Camp to be the recipient of the money raised from the Lower School "Coins For A Cause" campaign in March and presented a check in the amount of \$1785.23 to support their efforts.

For their self-designed service-learning project, eighth graders Adriana Lee and Kaelah Dealwis sponsored a banned book awareness campaign. In addition to making flyers and researching book ban legislation across the country, the girls contacted Little City Books and recommended they create a "banned book" section in the store.

Our Lower School Student Government Association distributed pre-purchased lemonade on Friday, May 26 and raised almost \$200 for Alzheimer's Association, the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research.

Fourth graders present their informational writing booklets at their American Revolution publishing party on Wednesday, May 31. They researched individual subtopics, typed and printed their work and added text features to create an expository nonfiction text.

Monday, June 5 marked the 10th anniversary of the HCS 3rd grade wax museum project. In support of their biography unit, students explored the lives of people who made a difference in the world and came alive to tell their stories and answer questions from museum visitors.

A huge thank you and congratulations to Mr. G for another wonderful Summer Gathering concert at the Sinatra Amphitheater on Tuesday, June 6. It was wonderful to see the entire K-8 community come out for the event, along with many alumni students. Thank you to all our students and families who volunteered their time to make the event a success.

Kindergarten students created Kindness Rocks and left them in Elysian Park to bring cheer to the community.

Congratulations to eighth graders Jordyn Eisen and Elsa Kahn who were selected as one of the 10 winning teams in New Jersey for this year's Panasonic Student Eco Citizenship Program - Eco Diary Competition. Jordyn and Elsa participated in the competition through the Green Bosses Mission Lab. Along with their classmates, they created student made items that earned \$250 in sales at the Hoboken Earth Day Celebration, which was in turn donated to Liberty Humane Society. Jordyn and Elsa cataloged their work in class through various diary entries. Congratulations to Jordyn and Elsa and their advisor, Ms. Ortiz!

Fourth graders engage in social issue book clubs, reading books that are focused on social justice issues relevant to 4th graders, while they read *Save Me A Seat* by Sarah Weeks and *Gita Varadarajan* as a class mentor text. These topics include bullying, disability rights, loss, inequality, discrimination, social change, and social action. Students participate in class discussions as others share their thoughts, experiences, and personal

ties to the social justice issues brought up in their book clubs.

Thanks to Mr. Keeler for planning another impressive Middle School science fair. And congratulations to our budding scientists who presented their research to staff, peers and families.

The Middle School Artsbridge elective classes presented their work in their triannual share sessions on Tuesday (6/13) and Wednesday (6/14). Students had the opportunity to take classes such as: Dance and Technology, Song Writing, Art Contractors, Encore, Art Exploration and Guitar 2.0.

On Thursday, June 15, the Middle School Mission Lab classes held their end of trimester share sessions. Students presented their culminating projects to classmates, teachers, younger students and families. Mission Lab classes this trimester included: Debate Tournaments, That's So Fetch, Environmental Challenges, Podcast, Photojournalism, Spring Into Green Bosses, Real World Disney, 3D Modeling and Printing and Shark Tank.

A huge shout out to Mr. Gavarny and Ms. Tarangelo for their hard work to take on the planning for K-8 Field Day this year on Monday, June 19. The event was a wonderful day for students at Pier A, supported by families and HCS alumni.

On Tuesday, June 20, forty-six Middle School students were recognized for their outstanding academic achievement and growth and service to the community with the annual Presidential Award Breakfast.

We congratulate our eighth graders on completing their time in the K-8 program with their commencement ceremony on Tuesday, June 20.

Several classes participated in experiential learning outside of the classroom:

- The first and second grade classes visited Carnegie Hall on Wednesday, May 10 for their Musical Explorers program. Over the second half of the year, students have explored music from around the world including Jordan and Vietnam.
- The third and fourth grade classes went to a Mets game at Citi Field as a part of their anti-bullying awareness event for schools.
- The kindergarten and first grade classes visited Liberty Science Center
- On Wednesday, May 24, third and fourth grade students visited Carnegie Hall as a part of their "Link Up" program, in which students in grades 3–5 are given the opportunity to join the orchestra in a highly participatory program, in which they learn to sing and play an instrument in the classroom and perform with a professional orchestra from their seats at a culminating concert onsite.
- The seventh grade class participated in a team building trip to Chelsea Piers
- The eighth graders visited Washington, DC and the Washington Mall as a part of their overnight trip to the DC area. Students were assigned various monuments and Smithsonian museum exhibits to research and then served as tour guides during the visit.
- The 7/8 Culture and Cuisine Enrichment Elective participated in a self-planned cultural walking tour in NYC
- Students in the Middle School MTSS class visited the Museum of Illusion
- The "That's So Fetch" Mission Lab participated in a team building trip as a part of their anti-bullying initiatives

## **12. Upper School Report**

Our Seniors have been incredibly busy this last month. They were all CPR certified here at school. They

worked with their Senior advisors to plan and host a beautiful Prom and they had a fun trip to Six Flags! It has long been the tradition of Hoboken Charter School for Seniors to conduct a final project culminating their learning here. Seniors presented their projects at a Senior Night, each one demonstrating their own interests and expertise as seen through a lens of Social Justice. Topics ranged from racial discrimination in medical practices to music and mental health.

The Chemistry and Environmental Science classes held a Science Fair to share some of their work from the year.

The Upper School staff, led by our Academic Guidance Counselor Jen Feit, held a Career Day. Over 20 experts (and HCS alums!) volunteered their time to come speak to students about their careers and career paths. Students joined panels and presentations on everything from success in college to neuropsychology or public service jobs. In the afternoon, staff held life skills workshops on everything from car maintenance to resume writing and interview skills.

The GSA club and LGBTQ+ elective planned and hosted a Coffee House event featuring student artwork and performances on the topic of Pride. We were delighted to have local celebrity Harmonica Sunbeam emcee the event.

**13. Public Comments.** There were no comments.

**14. Looking Ahead**

July 15	School to issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for custodial services.
August 1, 2023	Approval of School Annual Report, to be distributed in advance of the board meeting.

**15. New Business/Report from Committees**

Mark Silberberg commented that the Management Committee would make recommendations on the reorganization of committees at the July meeting. The Board Self-Examination forms were distributed to board members, and a due date of the following Monday (June 26<sup>th</sup>) was requested. Dana Wissing announced that she would not serve an additional term on the Board once her term expires. Board members requested that principals Palma and Weintraub summarize disciplinary matter trends semi-annually.

**16. Adjournment of Meeting**

Whereas, the business of the regular meeting has been concluded, now, therefore be it resolved that the HCS Board of Trustees adjourned their meeting of Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

It is hereby certified that the foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the HCS Board of Trustees, by the vote below indicated at the regular meeting held on Tuesday, June 20, 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE

TRUSTEE	MOTION	YES	NO	ABSTAIN	ABSENT
John Berger		X			
Lauren Calmas		X			
Amanda Grant					X
Grace Guandique		X			
Lisa McIntyre	1	X			
Kelly Pansy					X
Christine Sheedy					X
Mark Silberberg		X			
Joy Wheeler					X
Dana Wissing	2	X			

Certified by Board Secretary: Steve Literati

Date: June 20, 2023

Adjournment: 8:26