



HCCS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting – Wednesday, March 20, 2024 – 5:30 PM – Room #144

Public Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/96422657430>

- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call 5:31PM** - Sherry, Laura, Dillon, Mouna (5:45), Vincent, Jordan, Daniel (6). **Admin:** Kevin, Lindsay, Sue (6). **Staff Liaison:** Thaddeus
- II. **Changes or Additions to the Agenda - None**
- III. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes - All Present approved (Not Mouna, Daniel)**
- IV. **Public Comment**
 - a. **Sue Hoffbauer - See Addendum, read by Dillon**
 - b. **Thaddeus Wilson** - Displeasure at holding school on MLK day - profoundly disheartening that we're not using this day to honor the legacy of MLK and the ongoing injustices felt by BIPOC individuals. Rather than honoring this day I find myself working with little acknowledgement of civil rights. This is an example of white exceptionalism. If we do hold school on this day we should devote the day to education for students, parents, and staff in the community. **[See written statement].**
- V. **Board Correspondence - None**
- VI. **Presentations:** None
- VII. **Reports**
 - a. **President's Report - Sherry**
 - i. Encourage public input. Thank you for the public comment from Sue and Thaddeus. As we enter an accelerated section of our board term - work that's been done in all committees - come to fruition - compensation policies, board elections, director evaluation - we look forward to public input to make decisions for the community.
 - b. **Director's Report - Kevin**
 - i. Enrollment - 45 seats projected for available (including K). 182 applicants, 137 on the waitlist. Mariogla is working to finalize the lists and emails to families.
 - ii. Note of thanks to PTO - steam sub-committee - for a wonderful seamless talent show which seems more like a hollywood production. Thank you especially to Sherry and Mary for your years and years of dedication. And Thank you to the Literacy Committee for the Book Fair which roused excitement and left us with a hefty credit with Scholastic.
 - c. **Parent-Teacher Organization Report - None**
 - d. **Committee Reports as Applicable**
 - i. **Finance - Laura**
 1. You'll see action item below. Finance committee spent hours and hours taking all the existing board approved policies as they relate to compensation and benefits. We've made a flexible and easy to navigate document. Details will be discussed in the action item section. We continue to work on a budget - we are on high alert for fiscal responsibility - we're grateful for having an expert and a lot of people working to make sure we have sound financial health.
 - ii. **Governance - Sherry**
 1. Board Elections - Dillon (discussion below)
 2. Director Evaluation - Daniel co-leading with Sherry
 3. Charter Renewal with WISD - Sherry and Daniel, adding Vincent as a part of the working committee.
 - iii. **Strategic Planning - Sherry**
 1. We've adjusted our plans for this objective. As mentioned - communication, getting input from the community will be key - we should have a significant update next

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month as we receive the raw data from the WISD culture survey and we'll be sending out our own survey.

VIII. Discussion Items

- a. 2024 Board Elections - Nominations should open this weekend and will be open until at least April 3rd after spring break. I've reached out to the equity committee, PTO and Foundation offering an opportunity to include a question or two on the nomination form. Voting will launch via qualtrics on April 7th and run for 1 week until April 14th. Each household/family will have two votes - one for the primary and secondary emails listed on the student directory. Results will be reported at the April 17th board meeting.
- b. Comprehensive Compensation Policy - First Reading - Laura
 - i. Policy is effective on a rolling basis as new staff are hired. It does not change or decrease salaries on current positions. It increases the cap from 3 years to 5 on instructional staff steps.
 - ii. Eliminate additional step for social work degree for simplification
 - iii. Codifies that ED has tools including a critical shortage list
 - iv. PTO increased for 12-M staff from 10 to 15 days per year to reflect the increased number of days working annually.
 - v. Confirms admin guidelines for PTO policy is housed in the staff handbook and webportal not in board policy.
 - vi. Established a pay scale for ASP/Camp Coordinator position effective for new hires only
 - vii. Added two steps to IA payscale
 - viii. The driving force was clarity and simplicity - and an immense amount of work went into this process.
 - ix. Questions:
 1. **Vincent:** If we replaced the current staff with new staff with the same experience how would it affect our budget? **Laura:** Nothings going to change too much. What we're looking at as a next step is a budget, looking at the financial health of the school, bonuses, Cost of Living Advances. This step makes sure that the next steps are clear. **Sherry:** The board communication over the next four meetings we have a number of action items related to the compensation policy. The amount we pay per step hasn't increased since the step scale was established in 22/23. The three steps standard moving forward for review are step advancement, COLA (cost of living), and bonuses.
 2. **Dillon:** This is comprehensive and covers everyone employed by honey creek? **Sherry:** The only thing it doesn't cover is contract positions but does cover everyone hired directly in house.
 3. **Daniel:** What is the mechanism for step placement or step appeal? **Laura:** Right now that's a conversion and decision made by the Director.
 4. **Mouna:** Will there be any adjustments for current staff to address their placement on the step scale? Let's say someone happens to be placed on step number 2, then in review we see that they should've been placed at step 6. Is there a mechanism for an adjustment? **Laura:** It's not retroactive. If we have a pool of money we will address cola, bonuses, then step increases. Everyone rises together. **Sherry:** This doesn't affect current employment and any type of HR issue needs to be under the scope of Kevin. The work that's been done by Kevin over the last year to establish official job titles and functions has been in depth and allows us to clarify and make modifications differently. **Kevin:** We've had a few cases and we've agreed to an adjustment.
 - a. **Vincent** asking about making sure current staff is adjusted to the right step under the impression that this might be an issue. **Laura and Sherry** emphasized that finance committee would defer changes in steps to Kevin. There are systems in place to ensure equity and that transparency is key.
 5. **Daniel:** Is this information public once its public? **Sherry:** Yes. This is all public and available to staff.
 - x. This is a first reading. And questions or edits should be brought to Laura. We'll be doing a second reading and action item.
- c. Air Quality Response - Kevin

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- i. Air Quality response is in the same format as the Pandemic Response. This is a response to the experiences we had last year with the air quality issues due to wildfires. This is based on the EPA's Air Quality Index, including matching colors. When we put the policy together we cross referenced with last year's air quality to see how many times we would've had to have the kids indoors and originally it was way too aggressive. We adjusted while remaining sensitive to those with concerns for air quality. Thanks to Emily White for her hours of work.
- ii. This was reviewed by the Governance Committee.
- iii. Daniel: Is our building ventilation system capable of handling very unhealthy or hazardous conditions? Kevin: I can't answer that right now but can look into more information. Poor quality outside does make its way inside but no idea what that looks like just yet.
- iv. Laura: What was our worst day last year? Kevin: The low end of Unhealthy (would result in outdoor activities limited to non-vigorous activity and limited to 15 minutes. Recess, PE and ASP held indoors with less activities.
- d. Pandemic Response - No changes
 - i. Our policy is to refer to the CDC and so even with CDC changes our policy doesn't change.

IX. Action Items

- a. Charter Renewal Amendments - Sherry
 - i. Scope of changes has been reviewed by the governance committee. We have to renew our charter or we won't exist as a school. Initial charter was established in 1995 with a renewal every 5 years. 2019 was our last renewal leaving 2024 - June 30th - as our current contract expiration. Requesting extensions is not easy and does bring the state into the process.
 - ii. Sherry, Daniel, and Vincent are available for questions. Kevin is the liaison to WISD.
 - iii. The president of the board of trustees is a signatory on the contract renewal as well as the president of the board of WISD.
 - iv. **Laura** moves to recommend the authorization of the HCCS Charter of the WISD. **Mouna** seconded. Discussion:
 - 1. **Dillon:** The charter and bylaws indicate the max limits - but the actual term limits would be recommended by governance and then determined by the board at large. We do not have to change the term limits but have the flexibility to do so for example we can adjust terms such that nearly half the board isn't potentially turned over in any given election.
 - 2. **Sherry:** There's a lot of information needed to make good decisions as a trustee. The first year is often learning a lot, having three years leaves the last half of the term at full function. We need to clearly recognize the time commitment and make sure that candidates are well aware of the amount of real work being done. The real scope of work in this is compliance so that we're aware of our charter and bylaws and we're operationally in compliance.
 - 3. Edits include
 - a. Corrections to spelling, dates, grammar, using consistent language.
 - b. Update names of specific individuals (example: Executive Director name)
 - c. Clarified the board election process (2 votes per household, staff greater than half time)
 - d. Clarified the disqualification from office for HCCS trustees (No immediate family members - parents, siblings, spouse/partner, children)
 - e. Extend HCCS trustee possible term limit to 4 years.
 - f. Clarified termination of HCCS trustees (2/3rds majority vote from WISD board)
 - 4. **Mouna:** Is there time to make changes still? **Sherry:** Changes within the bullets we have? yes, a new bullet? no.
 - v. All in favor? Unanimous approval.
- b. 2023-24 Budget Amendment - Kevin
 - i. Shift from the original budget - there was an accounting error that has been adjusted for - and so we're coming in right where we expected. We're amending based on mid-year information.

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ii. Motion to approve the Budget Amendment: Dillon, Laura seconds.

iii. Discussion:

1. **Vincent:** Are we looking at the changes in spending for special education as a long term change? **Kevin:** It's difficult to have a longer view on the budget because of the way funding is established by the government. Previously we had a deliberate overrun because we knew there was an increase in per pupil funding. These expenditures were done with eyes wide open.
2. **Laura:** Did we have an increase in enrollment? **Kevin:** No we had an increase in per pupil funding. Our enrollment is down deliberately because of staffing issues. I do intend to reverse that next year when we're fully staffed. Also point out the state budget revenue conference has shown that we should continue with the per pupil increase. We should be well placed with the budget moving forward.
3. **Laura:** 17.86% seems very health (percentage of annual expenditures) - what accounts for the difference? **Kevin:** The money was prematurely counted last year due to the accounting errors. The bonuses were given in light of what we thought were an inflated fund balance. More IAs, increased class support have all been factors.
4. **Daniel:** So we may see one more amendment and then we close the books? **Kevin:** Yes, by law.

iv. All in favor? Unanimous Approval.

c. Hiring Recommendations:

i. Olivia Fink, Social Work

1. Motion to approve: Vincent, Seconded Jordan
2. **Kevin:** We are thrilled to be bringing Olivia onto our team. She interviewed twice and everyone involved was impressed. She brings a lot of experience. Her values align with the school. She'll start on April 1st after spring break. She is being hired as a replacement for Jo Brown.
3. **Sherry:** Is the assignment of step level determined by the critical shortage level? **Kevin:** Yes, this position qualifies.

ii. All in favor? Unanimous Approval.

X. Acknowledgements & Thank You's

- a. **Sherry:** Thank fellow trustees, Kevin, Lindsay, Sue and Thaddeus for their time here tonight as we focus on creating a solid foundation for the school. The incredible work by the community both in the classroom and out. March is a transition to the end of the school year - thanks in advance for the extra focus. We are Honey Creek because of the community.
- b. **Vincent:** Thank Thaddeus for his public comment. It's poignant and will feed future conversations. Thank you for your service for teaching Maturation.

XI. Public Comment -

- a. **Sue Hoffbauer:** Thank the finance committee and Kevin. I know the previous boards left the compensation dumped on this board to figure it out. I know that my case has been a unicorn - not instructional staff or a principal. Like to clarify why the step scale ends at 10 when the instructional scale ends at 16. Encourages the finance team to consider when thinking of the next budgets why these step-stops have ended where they are. We're Honey Creek, we don't necessarily use other models, we use our own models.

XII. Adjournment 7:11PM.

Public Comment Statement from Sue Hofbauer:

My name is Sue Hofbauer. I am a parent of a 4th grader, and have been an employee since August 2001.

I would like to comment on the proposal to extend a Board member's term from three years to four or six years.

I encourage the Board to tread carefully before extending terms. Yes, other districts may have longer terms; but other districts are K-12 with multiple schools. We are a single K-8 school. A six-year term is almost an entire student's career at Honey Creek.

One concern is that this Board will have trouble recruiting members who are willing to commit the next 6 years of their lives, especially if they have young children. Another concern is: If they are willing to do so, why?

Currently, all across this country, people are using school boards as a way to inject political ideologies at the local level. Someone could join the Board with an agenda to change the mission or culture of the school, or to oust a staff member. These have happened in the past here at Honey Creek. It is not easy to remove a Board member once elected, especially now that we are shrinking the size of the Board. One person could do a lot of damage in four or six years.

The AAPS Board has seven members with 4 year terms, and they have gotten themselves into quite a mess. They won't be the ones paying the consequences, though.

Three year terms make it easier to recruit quality candidates who may not have otherwise considered serving the school in this capacity. Three year terms also make it easier to re-elect, or not re-elect them after the community sees how they vote for a few years.

Thank you for your consideration and for choosing to serve our school.

~Sue

Public Comment Statement from Thaddeus Wilson:

I am speaking to express my deep displeasure at the decision to hold school on Martin Luther King Day. As a member of the community, I find it profoundly disheartening that we are not using this day to honor the legacy of Dr. King and the ongoing struggles faced by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) individuals in our nation.

Martin Luther King Day should serve as a solemn reminder of the historic and ongoing injustices faced by BIPOC communities. It should be a day dedicated to learning about their struggles and contemplating how we can work towards a more just and equitable society. Yet, instead of honoring this day appropriately, I found myself working, with only a cursory mention of civil rights.

This decision reflects a larger cultural problem of white exceptionalism, where the experiences and struggles of BIPOC individuals are marginalized or ignored. If we are to hold school on Martin Luther King Day, it should be dedicated to racial sensitivity training for students and parents alike. It is essential that everyone in our community understands that white supremacy still exists, even in our supposedly progressive enclave.

Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize that the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act were not enacted to "give" rights to people of color, but rather as reminders to a white supremacist nation that BIPOC individuals indeed have these rights as full citizens, granted by the 13th Amendment. The lack of celebration or accommodation for the concerns and needs of minority families only exacerbates feelings of being undervalued, unwanted, and unprotected by the ugliness of white supremacy.

I have been approached by parents of color and my own children, who feel marginalized and unacknowledged by the school's failure to adequately observe Martin Luther King Day nor Black History Month. If we continue down this path, we risk perpetuating a community that is far from diverse and inclusive.

I urge the school board to reconsider its decision and take meaningful action to honor the significance of Martin Luther King Day. Let us use this day as an opportunity to educate ourselves and our children about the ongoing struggles for racial justice and equality. Only then can we truly strive towards building a more equitable and inclusive community for all.

**Thank you for listening,
Thaddeus Wilson**