

**HCCPS Board of Trustees  
Meeting Agenda  
April 8, 2015**

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School was founded in 1995 as a Massachusetts Public Charter School. Our mission is:

- ❖ To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.
- ❖ To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- ❖ To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

**Facilitator: Kipp Armstrong**

**6:30 Opening / Welcoming (read mission statement) (10)**

Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements \*Committee reports due end of April\*  
Agenda check; Appoint timekeeper, listkeeper  
Need for Thank You Notes written from BOT President?  
Approve Minutes from previous meeting

**6:40 Public Comment period (10)**

**6:50 Personnel Committee Visit/Introductions; Dan, Jessica (10 min)**

**7:00 Topic of the month reprise: Bonuses; Kipp, Susannah (15min) (Discussion)**

**7:15 GABS; Susannah, Penny (10 min) (Decision Clerk Description)**

**7:25 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter financials; Amy/Scott (20 min) (Discussion)**

**7:45 LRP Updates; Coordinators (10 min) (Discussion)**

**7:55 Annual Meeting; Deirdre (10) (Discussion)**

**8:05 New Business**

**8:10 Committee Reports- Questions only (note: Security report, G2G – will be handed out)**

**8:20 Meeting Wrap-up/ Evaluation/Minutes Finalization**

Set date/ facilitator, snack bringer, newsletter blurb, check agenda for next meeting

**8:25 Review Action Items in this meeting's minutes; Knox (5 min)**

**8:30 Adjournment to executive session for the purposes of real estate negotiations.**

**Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, March 11, 2015**

**Present:** Penny Leveritt, Deirdre Arthen, Amy Aaron, Susannah Howe, Kipp Armstrong, Laura Baker, Jesse Belcher-Timme, David Starr, Dan Klatz, Scott Remick, Jess Berrien, Ellen Ferris,  
**Regrets:** Jess Berrien  
**Facilitator:** Kipp Armstrong  
**Notetaker:** Ellen Ferris  
**Guests:** Dianne Hobbs, Mike Simonelli, Tom Rossmassler  
**Listkeeper:** Laura Baker  
**Timekeeper:** David Starr  
**Mission statement read by:** Susannah Howe

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<b>Announcements/Appreciations/Acknowledgements</b>	<p><u>Announcements:</u>            Board members were asked to edit the BOT terms document.            Amy informed board about suit against Dept of Ed. which claims that caps on charters denies students' civil rights who are on waiting lists. <del>list with civil rights claim against caps on Charter schools.</del></p> <p><u>Appreciations:</u>            Jess acknowledged Mitch Hartley and Jeanne Marie Tobin for their work on the science fair.</p> <p>Susannah expressed appreciation to the Prisms teachers and parents for a successful Coffee House</p> <p>Laura Baker thanked board members for their contributions to the Prisms Coffee house raffle.</p>	
<b>Minutes</b>	<p>Minor edits made to Jan. 2015 minutes            Penny proposed a further discussion of the board minutes process.</p>	<p>Susannah moved to approve minutes as amended, Ellen seconded. Minutes approved by consensus</p>
<b>Public Comment Period</b>	<p>N/A</p>	

<p><b>Solar Contract</b></p>	<p>Amy introduced the Solar Panel proposal and questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should the board move towards agreeing to this project?</li> <li>• Is there another way to achieve the goal outside of the Solar Sense contract?</li> <li>• Mike and Tom can be available to answer questions.</li> </ul> <p>Questions/Discussion points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear of consequences with landlord if we don't agree to the project.</li> <li>• insurance company comments on the contract sent to Solar Sense. We will need an attorney with expertise in this area.</li> <li>• What is most cost effective? Tom examined the project and variables and recommended getting into the market now versus waiting. Felt the rate was a good deal but still needs a few more details to make a definitive examination of potential savings/costs.</li> <li>• The hiccup is that we don't own the building.</li> <li>• The company will redo half the roof when they install the solar system, maintains the roof space, takes responsibility for all liability issues for that space.</li> <li>• HCCPS does not have details on agreement between the building owners and Solar Sense currently.</li> <li>• Fed/State government subsidies could end for these type of deals.</li> <li>• The panels will be installed as covered parking in one line of parking in the lot.</li> <li>• Electricity rates increase at about 2.5% so could save HCCPS money if we lock in rate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Laura proposed to authorize Admin Coordinator and designated board member (Laura) to take any such actions necessary to ensure provision of electricity to the school on terms that they deem are most beneficial to the school, up to and including entering into a 20-year contract with a solar energy provider. Jesse seconded the motion. Approved by consensus.</b></p>
<p><b>Personnel Proposal</b></p>	<p>Dan introduced Personnel proposal initiated by staff members regarding employee payrate increase for teaching assistants Kid's Club. Discussion points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last rate raise for Kid's Club 2-3 years ago.</li> <li>• Any repercussions for those with similar additional responsibilities? No one in a completely similar situation.</li> <li>• We are due to re-examine the basic TA payscale next year which could have an effect.</li> <li>• Our current payrate is competitive and the raise would be for only Kid's Club hours.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jess moved to approve proposal to increase T.A. hourly rate in Kid's Club by \$1/hour. Laura seconded. Approved by consensus.</b></p>

**Comment [1]:** For discussion: Since the solar proposal wasn't in the formal packet, do we need to add a sentence or two of context (for the minutes) regarding what the contract is? Perhaps we could pull a sentence from Amy's summary email?

<b>GABS BoT recruitment</b>	<p>Penny introduced the GABS proposals. Discussion points were the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Charles and Steve would be on the slate proposed to the community for approval at the Annual Meeting in May.</li> <li>● All agreed they were great candidates.</li> <li>● Charles is aware of the process. Penny will check in with him to be sure.</li> <li>● Concern expressed that we don't have enough community/non-parent members.</li> <li>● GABS is considering a public relations packet to distribute to potential board members.</li> </ul> <p>GABS will work on the job description for Clerk.</p>	
<b>FY16 Budget draft</b>	<p>Amy distributed draft of 2016 budget and noted changes. Board discussed changes, potential increases.</p>	
<b>Topic of the month: Bonuses</b>	<p>Jesse recused himself and left the room.</p> <p>Kipp introduced the discussion of bonuses and asked the board to consider when salaries and increases will be unfrozen. One idea is to give bonuses, <u>IF there are sufficient surplus funds at the end of the year</u> to all employees. discussion points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How will they be distributed, assuming there are funds available.</li> <li>● Board discussed priorities and projects still needed at the school.</li> <li>● Any excess funds could be used for capital expenses, bonuses, and/or budget deficit for 2016.</li> <li>● The board will discuss again in April and make a decision in May.</li> </ul>	
<b>Plan for Annual Meeting</b>	<p>Deirdre informed the board that the annual meeting and board meeting are scheduled on the same day. She also asked the board what topics should be on the agenda. Discussion points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Perhaps an open forum would help.</li> <li>● Topic of a celebration of the space and all we've accomplished.</li> <li>● Information on reconfiguration of the 6-8 grades.</li> <li>● <del>Board meeting will be on May 20.</del></li> <li>● Potential green building topics.</li> <li>● Need to increase volunteerism.</li> </ul> <p><u>BOT meeting will be moved to May 20, a week after the Annual Meeting on May 13.</u></p>	

<b>New Business</b>	ArtSpark scheduled for March 28, 7-10PM	
<b>Committee Reports - Questions only</b>	In Domain Council typo in meeting minutes. Changed "prisons" to "Prisms"	
<b>Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation</b>	Next meeting is scheduled for April 8. Snacks: Jess and Kipp Newsletter blurb: Penny	
<b>Review Action Items: Ellen</b>	Ellen reviewed the action items.	

Attachments:

BOT Meeting Agenda, Unapproved BOT mtg minutes from Feb 2015, Personnel Proposal: Kids Club Pay Rate; BoT Interest letter: Charles Weimeyer, BoT interest letter: Steven Hoyt; GABS Report Feb 2015; Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of 02-27-15; On-Site Committee Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, March 3, 2015; Domain Council Minutes from 2/13/2015

Tentative Agenda for April meeting (4/8/15) is:

- Brassworks security deposit?
- GABS updated job description for clerk
- LRP Coordinator updates
- 3rd Quarter financials
- Bonuses discussion
- Personnel committee visit
- School security report



**Proposal to the Board of Trustees**  
From  
Governance and Board Sustainability Committee

**Date:** April 8, 2015

**Priority Level:** MEDIUM

**Proposal to be presented by:** GABS

**Committee members drafting proposal:** Deirdre Arthen, Susannah Howe, Amy Reesman, Penny Leveritt

**Text of proposal:**

GABS proposes a revised job description for the HCCPS Board of Trustees Clerk.

(See attached for proposed job description revision.)

**Goals to be achieved by proposal:**

The BOT clerk should have a revised job description that reflects the current practice and workings of the governance of HCCPS as they specifically relate to the duties of the clerk. GABS chose to provide a simplified clerk job description to present to the BOT for approval.

GABS and the clerk will, at a later date, create a supporting internal handbook that will be made available to the clerk on the [trustees@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:trustees@hilltowncharter.org) google account and in hard copy, as needed, to assist the clerk in completing the duties as described in the proposed clerk job description.

**Potential problems/dissenting views:**

Probably none.

**Additional notes:**

**Job Description for HCCPS Clerk of the Board of Trustees  
(prepared 4/2015)**

The Board Clerk's duties include the following:

1. Ensure that the Board of Trustees (BOT) is in compliance with all applicable Massachusetts reporting requirements.
2. Ensure all BOT documents (policies, minutes, records, etc.) are kept up-to-date and accessible to the HCCPS community. In particular, ensure that the BOT meeting support process is followed.
3. Ensure that all required BOT correspondence within the HCCPS community is completed in a timely manner.

**Categories of duties**

1. Reporting to the State
  - a. Summer letter regarding board membership
  - b. Annual financial disclosure forms
  - c. Conflict of Interest training
  - d. Certificate of receipt of Open Meeting Law materials
  - e. State approval of new board members
  - f. Resignations and end-of-term departures
  - g. BOT & Committee meetings and meeting date/time changes
2. Keeping board books up to date
3. Annual meeting support
4. Board of trustees meetings support

(see HCCPS clerk procedural handbook for detailed instructions for the duties above.)

# HCCPS

## LRP Update

Name: Amy Aaron

Date: 3/31/2015

LRP Goal: Goal #1, Site –

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### Items Accomplished:

- In conjunction with On Site Committee and Domain Coordinators have begun prioritizing summer projects
- Prioritization includes programmatic and economic considerations
- Ongoing work with building owners re: regulation of the HVAC systems. New, high efficiency boiler installed in Feb. along with improved heating to nurse's office.
- Negotiating a PPA for the installation of solar panels
- Acoustic treatments in All School, music room nearly complete; more materials on order to complete K-5 classrooms
- Installed security buzzer system on front door

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### Obstacles:

Limited time and finances

Relying on building owners to schedule their subcontractors

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### Next Steps:

Continue pressure on building owner to complete all tasks that are their responsibility

Finish acoustic treatments where needed

Prepare for summer playground work

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LRP Goal: Goal #2 School Finance

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### Items Accomplished:

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- We have a contingency fund that is 12% of our FY 15 operating budget
  - We are operating with a FY 15 zero balanced operating budget
  - Developing FY 16 budget drafts in conjunction with Domain Council
  - Finance and Site continue to assess which building related capital expenses can be completed this year and next

# HCCPS

## LRP Update

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Name: Deirdre Pulgram Arthen

Date: 4- 8- 2015

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LRP Goal: Community Goal 1

**Create and Implement Community Team**

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**Items Accomplished:**

Community Team has been meeting for a year.  
Comm Coord., 1 teacher, counselor, 5 parents

Family events planned and hosted – First Friday party, Winter Fair

Regular meetings and ongoing planning continues

Improved access to school events on the webpage and in newsletter – largely thanks to Grace

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**Obstacles:**

Still no simple method for getting input due to no student council

Hard to find good meeting time for both staff and parents

Big job that can expand easily – needs organization, prioritization and short term goals

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**Next Steps:**

Currently working on:

Annual meeting, 20<sup>th</sup> birthday party, parent parking, outreach to parents of older kids

# HCCPS

## LRP Update

Name: Deirdre Pulgram Arthen

Date: 4-8-15

**LRP Goal:** Community Goal 2

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**New Student/Family Integration**

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**Items Accomplished:**

Revised beginning of the year events to First Friday party and class parties before school opens

Brought in 2 Americorps members

For Parents:

New parent breakfast. Coop meeting with focus on new parents (not too successful)

Sent special invitations to events, Conversations with parents of new younger kids

Morning Coffee hours (restarting soon)

For Students:

Work building student community within classrooms has been successful

Prisms Leadership Teams

6<sup>th</sup> grade teambuilding trip

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**Obstacles:**

Parents of new older students seem reluctant to show up or volunteer for all school events. Results are better for class-related events and Prisms teachers have increased these opportunities.

Low rate of response to emails and volunteer forms.

Drop off and pick up ease make it unnecessary for many parents to ever come into school, so they don't interact with each other or staff informally. Not a problem overall with parents of kids grades K-4

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**Next Steps:**

Ask for help from teachers

Brainstorm with Community Team

Identify parents to work with

Parent Survey in spring

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# HCCPS

## LRP Update

**Name:** Deirdre Pulgram Arthen

**Date:** 4-8-15

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**LRP Goal:** Community Goal 3  
**Traditions Supporting School Culture**

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**Items Accomplished:**

Leadership Teams begun  
CSL time set aside in Purples  
Buddy classes for all Purples  
Hilltown Harmonies and 2-5 chorus successes  
Mummers Play repeat  
Il Teatro improving

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**Obstacles:**

Leadership Teams need adjusting – hard to meet the original goals of visibility and service to the community.

Teaching the entering 6-8<sup>th</sup> graders the songbook (our shared community language) is hard to accomplish – we need time for that.

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**Next Steps:**

Work with Prisms and Purples teachers to plan for next year  
Student Community Leadership Team has some great ideas – use them!

# HCCPS

## LRP Update

Name: Deirdre Pulgram Arthen

Date: 4-8-15

**LRP Goal:** Community Goal 4

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**Leadership Training (due to begin in 2015-16)**

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**Items Accomplished:**

Leadership Teams in Prisms  
CSL in Purples  
Initial conversations about Restorative Justice

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**Obstacles:**

None yet – foreseen, meeting time.

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**Next Steps:**

Keep going, see how it goes this year  
Plan with teachers for Leadership Teams and more time next year  
Work with teaching staff about integration among all ages.

# HCCPS

## LRP Update

Name: Dan Klatz

Date: April 3, 2015

### LRP Goal:

#### **K-8 Curriculum Review**

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**Items Accomplished:** Reviewed Reading curriculum K-8 for alignment with Common Core. Identified areas for modification, specifically regarding phonics in grades K-3.

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**Obstacles:** Financial restraints may limit options.

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**Next Steps:** Teachers will be recommending a unified K-5 phonics/spelling program by the end of the year. Continue ELA review with focus on the writing curriculum

### LRP Goal:

#### **Academic Affiliation and Teaching Interns**

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**Items Accomplished:** Have agreement with Smith College Education Department on pilot program—see attached. The pilot has been approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies, and we can therefore begin in Fall 2015.

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**Obstacles:** Just implementation

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**Next Steps:** Interview candidates, make selections, begin implementation

### LRP Goal:

#### **Grades 6-8 Program Reorganization**

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**Items Accomplished:** Developed a staffing plan for grades 7/8. We will have an additional Math/Science teacher and an additional Humanities/ELA teacher.

Developed several schedule models that will incorporate all three grades and allow for sharing of space.

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**Obstacles:** To be determined during implementation

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**Next Steps:** Hiring of new staff; summer planning; ordering furnishings and supplies for additional classrooms.

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## Teaching Fellowship Program

The Hilltown Teaching Fellowship is a two-year program offered by Smith College and the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public school that offers an intensive internship in multi-grade classrooms, Kindergarten through Grade Eight. In unique and select instances, a one year internship may be available.

Teaching Fellows work the full school year with the supervising teacher (192 days), performing essential functions and working the hours of a teacher, provided they do not conflict with the required course load at Smith College. Daily work hours are generally 8 am-4 pm, with occasional meetings past 4 pm.

Teaching Fellows assist the classroom teacher and other staff in facilitating the creation of a respectful, safe, and nurturing classroom environment. Fellows plan and facilitate lessons in all curricular areas on a weekly basis. They work individually with assigned students and with small groups on activities planned by the special education and classroom teachers. Fellows develop and maintain good working relationships with families of classroom students, participate in professional development activities and staff meetings, and provide observational feedback on student performance/behavior to teachers.

Teaching Fellows manage the whole class when needs arise taking the teacher away from the class. They prepare materials needed for lessons as assigned by the classroom teacher, perform classroom clerical duties including correcting and documenting student work, and supervise and monitor students during lunch and recess as assigned.

Hilltown Teaching Fellows will serve their first year in a mixed-age classroom, and their second year in a different mixed-age classroom. Fellows will leave the program with teaching experience at four different grade levels. The Fellowship pays a \$10,000 annual stipend.

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES  
03.06.15

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Kipp Armstrong, Amy Aaron, Deirdre Arthen,

8:30am – Meeting began

The initial focus of today's meeting was to review the agenda for the March 2015 BOT meeting.

We then discussed the agenda item - topic of the month: potential bonuses, and ways to divide funds if available to give as bonuses. Deidre had the idea to figure the % of the total salary line represented by the amount available for bonuses and give bonus amounts equal to that percent. This idea will be presented at the March BOT meeting.

Amy then briefed us on the current site list of to do items.

Amy also briefed us on the solar contract draft we have received, she will present the opportunity at the March BOT meeting.

Dan briefed us on an issue regarding parental feedback to the Prisms curriculum, parents of a student do not think geo-political conflicts should be linked to the study of religion.

9:45am – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kipp Armstrong

DOMAIN COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES  
03.18.15

Attending: Susannah Howe, Dan Klatz, Kipp Armstrong, Amy Aaron, Deirdre Arthen,

12:00pm – Meeting began

The initial focus of today's meeting was to establish the agenda for the April 2015 BOT meeting.

We also discussed the timing of continuing bonus discussions with the BOT before all financials are clear – we decided the discussion at April BOT was worthwhile as we will benefit from a thoroughly discussed decision process.

Amy suggested a BOT member be identified as a formal thank you note writer when needed, it was agreed this should be the President of the BOT unless there are extenuating circumstances. We also decided to add this to the opening announcements item on the agenda.

We discussed Give to Grow updates from Sonja to the BOT and feel a short, concise written monthly update would be best.

Dan also updated us on the Prisms curriculum concern from a student's parents. The concern prompted insightful dialogue and will be responded to by a change in the curriculum the next time it is taught (in 2 years).

1:15pm – Meeting ended

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kipp Armstrong

## **GABS Report March 18, 2015**

### **Updating Board and Officer Job Descriptions - to be done over several months**

We continued work on updating the document for the Clerk job description. It was decided that the section relating to clerk responsibilities surrounding procedures before, during and after Board meetings might better serve as a separate internal “how-to” document (entitled “Board Meeting Support Procedures” for the use of the clerk and GABS (as needed). In addition this separate document could be useful instruction for hired minutes takers or other persons to whom the pertinent board meeting duties could be delegated. As this would be a procedural document, GABS feels that it would not need to come to the Board as a proposal, and a summary of clerk duties related to board meetings will be included in the clerk job description proposal coming to the Board.

GABS will continue working on the clerk job description individually and the proposal will be brought to the board at the April meeting.

### **Housekeeping:**

the clerk will continue to add pdfs of board book documents to the [trustees@hilltowncharter.org](mailto:trustees@hilltowncharter.org) account

## **Hilltown Special Education PAC Meeting Minutes: Thursday, March 19, 2015, 6:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Tara Winters, Jen Marshall, PAC Co-Chairs; Dan Klatz, and 27 parents and Purples/Prisms Students.

**Overview:** The Thursday, March 19th SEPAC Meeting was a presentation: From Hilltown to High School: Transition Planning. Four former HCCPS students who are now in high school sat on a panel for a discussion moderated by Tara and Jen, followed by an open Q&A session for the parents and students in the audience. The panelists were: Tori Laverdiere, currently a junior at Northampton High; Maible Coughlin, currently a senior at Hartsbrook; Olivia Ferguson, currently a senior at Easthampton High; and, Lucas Solem, currently a sophomore at Northampton High.

**A lively, informative discussion took place after introductions. Notes from that discussion are as follows:**

### **General Observations:**

--Many of the panelists were worried before entering high school, but all found the transition easier than they thought it would be once they began school.

--More than one panelist reported being very ready from day 1 for honors level work at the high schools they attended.

--All panelists liked being in high school and had very positive things to say about their experiences and high schools.

### **How did HCCPS help prepare the students for high school?**

--The many public speaking requirements and opportunities at HCCPS helped them tremendously in high school. They were not nervous, whereas many of their peers who had not had such opportunities were nervous.

--8th grade projects at HCCPS gave the students a foundation in project management and organization that other students lacked

--The Reading Buddies program at HCCPS prepared the students for good relationship foundations and a sense of responsibility to their larger community

--HCCPS prepared students for active, experiential learning. Students get used to talking directly to teachers at HCCPS, a skill that is really helpful at a bigger school where students need to be able to advocate for themselves in the classroom.

--Encouragement of volunteerism, and general participation in school activities, is a great foundation for future work in high school, such as serving on the National Honor Society or joining new clubs.

--Students expressed feeling well prepared in the area of Math

--A student from NHS expressed that feeling comfortable with adults and talking with teachers at HCCPS allowed for greater connections with teachers at the high school level

--HCCPS promotes a culture where making friends is easy and those skills transfer well to bigger schools where you need to meet new people.

### **What are the challenges and how should students prepare to meet them?**

--Homework in high school is not always consistent or predictable. Need to learn to plan for extra time in case a “surprise” assignment pops up and, often, students need more time for homework than what they previously planned for at HCCPS.

--If you need an IEP or 504, it is much better to enter high school with one already in place.

--Teachers are open to making accommodations, but students must learn to ask for those accommodations (like extra time) in advance. The day after your homework is due is not acceptable.

--High school schedules are more complicated than HCCPS and students have more “little pieces” to keep track of. High school expects students to be responsible for organizing themselves--so be sure to find a system that works for you.

--At Northampton High, the two students present felt that the HCCPS science curriculum did not “match up” with what is taught at JFK and in some subjects--biology and anatomy were named--they felt behind those students from JFK. The students from Easthampton High and Hartsbrook did not experience that.

### **Suggestions for increasing success:**

--Get involved in extracurricular activities such as drama or other clubs, and athletics - it's “not scary at all” and instantly assists in forming a large friend group

### **Responses to audience questions:**

--WORKLOAD: Communicate with your teachers! Especially before due dates if challenges arise or exist. Staying after school with teachers for assistance can also be a great help.

--SOCIAL TRANSITION: There are often team-building games in classes freshman year; most people are nice, & bullying is rare - there are just some people who aren't very nice at times. Making friends is simpler than it seems.

--PEER PRESSURE?: Across the board it could be perceived, but in general is not the case and kids just do what they are going to do.

--STIGMA WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION?: No stigma or judgment, and all backgrounds and kinds of kids take academic support classes. Don't hesitate to talk with your teachers about any concerns!

**\*A huge thank you to our four awesome student volunteers!!!\***

**Next Meeting - NEW DATE: Wednesday, April 29th: Parents Rights Workshop**  
**with Special Education Advocate Ingrid Flory, 6:30 PM @ HCCPS**