

HCCPS Board of Trustees
Meeting Agenda
December 9th, 2020 6:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81426027291?pwd=ZkZJT1NuUEVvK3lTeUNELzNMaDVmdz09>

Meeting ID: 814 2602 7291 Passcode: hilltown

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 that 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: Matt Dube

6:30 Welcoming (read mission statement): (10 min)

Announcements, appreciations, acknowledgements

Agenda Check: Appoint timekeeper, list keeper

Thank You Note Check

BOT Visibility this month

Approve minutes from previous BOT meeting

6:40 Public Comment period: (10 min)

6:50 Personnel Committee Report: (10 min)

7:00 Charter Board Survey: Kelly (5 min)

7:05 Enrollment Policy: Kate (10 min)

7:15 Special Subcommittee Work/Needs: Dawn/Matt (10 min)

7:25 Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion (JEDI): Jen/Karen (10 min)

7:35 In-Person/Hybrid/Remote Updates: Kate/Lara/Deirdre (25 min)

8:00 Work-From-Home Procedure (10 min)

8:10 Committee Reports -- Questions Only (5 min)

8:15 New Business (5 min)

8:20 Meeting Wrap-up/Evaluation/Newsletter Blurb/Minutes Finalization (5 min)

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

8:30 Adjournment

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Board of Trustees DRAFT Meeting Minutes – Wednesday, November 18, 2020, 6:30 pm

Location: By Zoom (pursuant to Governor Baker’s March 12, 2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law)

Present: Kate Saccento, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen, Matt Dube, Noelle Barrist Stern, Rich Senecal, Kelly Woods, Karen Sise, Paula Ingram, Jen Matos, Sara Schieffelin, Chris Korczak, Dawn Reesman, Joe Wyman, Kathleen Szegda, Jill Richmond, Tala Elia

Regrets: None

Facilitator: Matt

Notetaker: Noelle

Guests: (As listed in the Zoom participant information) Sam Schoenberger, Beth Adel, Mary Price, Keri Simonelli, Emily, Gina Wyman, Marguerite Durant, Helen Korczak, Myssie Casinghino, Rebecca Belcher-Timme, Grace Tiso, Alex Niemiec, Tamara Kupfer, Scott Meyers, Dietrich, Tiffany Ross, Kate’s iPhone, Meg Colenback, Patti Mars Senecal, Andrew Sirulnik, Sara Lunt

List keeper: N/A because of “raise hand” function on Zoom

Timekeeper: Chris

Mission statement read by: Dawn

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
<p>Announcements/ Appreciations/ Acknowledgements</p>	<p><u>Announcements:</u> <u>Appreciations/Acknowledgements:</u></p> <p>Noelle made an announcement that Liz Preston has resigned from the Board. She found it challenging as a community member to be disconnected from the school during COVID and felt that she did not have as much to contribute. She noted that she thought the Board was in good hands. Matt noted that Liz had made a big contribution to the Board and the school and she would be missed.</p> <p>Dawn noted that she appreciated the additional communications from the Directors to parents. She said it has been helpful. Matt seconded this.</p>	

Any thank you notes needed?	It was suggested that we send a thank you note to Liz.	Dawn will send a thank you note to Liz.
BOT Visibility this month?	Each Board member introduced themselves for the three new Board members: Jill, Tala, and Kathleen.	
Minutes	Noelle asked if someone had been assigned the newsletter blurb at the October meeting. Joe said that he had written it. Noelle proposed that the minutes be amended to reflect that Joe wrote the newsletter blurb.	Joe moved to approve the October meeting minutes, as amended; Chris seconded; the Board approved the minutes, as amended, by consensus.
Public Comment Period	None	
Committee Goals (Finance/Facilities)	<p>Rich presented the Finance Committee's Goals: (1) balance the budget; (2) use COVID grants appropriately; (3) review the school's \$0 balance budget policy; and (4) complete a mid-year review of frozen staff salaries.</p> <p>Joe presented the Facilities Committee's Goals: (1) complete an energy audit to determine how/if the system can be approved; (2) analyze the cost/need of mini splits for 6th-8th grade wing; (3) look at the feasibility of creating a barrier to protect the plants outside the school; and (4) have an audit to assess the building's accessibility.</p>	
Revised GABS Proposal	Noelle explained that the proposal for having staff members and teachers serve on Board committees had been revised following the last Board meeting. It was proposed that, if more than one staff member or teacher is interested in the same position and they cannot resolve among themselves who will fill the role, the decision will be made by the committee chair	Noelle moved to approve the revised proposal; Sara seconded; the Board approved the revised proposal by consensus.

	in connection with the GABS chair.	
New Board Members' Committee Placements (GABS)	Noelle proposed that Jill be on the Finance or Facilities Committee (because Facilities involves long-term capital investment); Kathleen and Tala be on GABS or Personnel; and that, if succession planning is done as part of the last LRP (likely to be considered in January), they could serve there as well. Deirdre pointed out we would ask Tala and Kathleen to consult on COVID-related issues. Kathleen expressed an interest in JEDI. Facilities and Personnel both expressed an interest in having a new member. It was agreed that Jill will serve on Facilities, Kathleen will serve on JEDI, and Tala will serve on Personnel.	
Q1 Financial Update (Kate/Rich)	Kate referred to the documents in the Board packet. She noted there was nothing surprising for Q1. Differences from the anticipated budget were two COVID-related grants. This grant money was spent for tents, tablets, things related to the on-line curriculum, and PPE. Funds from one of the grants needed to be spent by the end of the year.	
Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion (Jen/Karen)	Karen discussed possible JEDI training for the Board and the related cost. The Collaborative for Educational Services ("CES") would be able to provide a two-part training (two four-hour sessions) for \$1,580 per session. Comments were made about scheduling in advance so that everyone is able to attend. There was also a discussion about whether it would be possible to reduce the cost by having the training with another school district. Comments were made that the training would be specifically tailored to the school and, as a result, it might not work to have the training with another school district. Kate noted that there was a Board discretionary fund. Deirdre commented that the Board had never spent this amount of money on a project of its own. It was decided that JEDI should write up a proposal with the total cost and bring it to the next Finance Committee	The JEDI Committee will write up a proposal with the total cost of the training and present it to the Finance Committee at the Finance Committee's December 2nd meeting. The JEDI Committee will also send a Doodle Poll for dates for the training.

	<p>meeting. Once approved by the Finance Committee, the proposal could be brought back to the Board for final approval. Joe asked that, in the interim, the JEDI Committee start to work on dates so that they are in place if the proposal is approved.</p> <p>Jen referenced the letter that the JEDI Committee had sent to the school community.</p> <p>Deirdre said that she reached out to parents who had approached the Board previously about JEDI issues to see if they could put together a parent group, but had not received adequate responses to proceed further.</p>	
<p>Community COVID Update (Kathleen)</p>	<p>Kathleen explained that she is the Director of Community Research and Evaluation at the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts. They look at the average daily incidence rate per 100,000. She broke it down by the country, the state, and Western Massachusetts counties. She also explained the community COVID risk categorization. Based on those metrics, as of last week, Easthampton was a yellow community (1.05% positivity rate) and Northampton was green (.77% positivity rate). They also look at school cluster data. She said there has been a lot of household transmission.</p> <p>In response to questions, Kathleen and Tala explained that the spread in schools was lower than in the community. This is because of the protective measures (masking and social distancing) that are used in schools. In schools throughout the country, where precautions are taken, there are not widespread clusters.</p> <p>Kathleen emphasized the importance of continuing to track the data. Tala explained that the data is very nuanced.</p> <p>Mary noted that she has seen no COVID fatigue at</p>	

	school among the staff or students.	
<p>In-Person/Hybrid/Remote Updates (Kate/Lara/Deirdre)</p>	<p>Lara stated that in-person learning has gone very well. The plan is to extend in-person learning for the K-1 group to four times per week. She explained that this is possible based on all of the work that goes into coordinating the pick-up and drop-off. Protective measures have been working well (<i>e.g.</i>, wearing appropriate masks, hand sanitizing, single-use bathrooms, no eating in the building (eating outside the building is working for the limited students who are there for the whole day)). A staff member has been hired to oversee outdoor eating, sanitizing, and maintaining social distancing in hallways.</p> <p>Kate said that she was very proud of the school. She discussed the steps that were taken in the fall for reopening and the implementation of the plan for teachers and staff to request to work from home. Twenty-one out of fifty-one are in the building. Thirty staff members are working either entirely or partly from home.</p> <p>Lara and Kate explained that we are at a crossroads with the weather getting colder. The school can no longer rely on being outside. Lara said that the school wanted to have a minimum of two hours of in-person learning for all age groups and that would need to be in the building. They noted that we are coming to the end of our ability to individualize staff members' needs and preferences. It would cost approximately \$45,000 to hire substitutes for the sixth through eighth grade teachers. Students could come into the building and teachers could teach from home; there would need to be staffing in those rooms, which would be done by the substitutes. We would also need to increase costs for cleaning and special education services.</p> <p>Lara clarified that the questions for discussions are: (1) how much does the Board want to spend from the</p>	<p>Chris made a motion to release \$45,000 in emergency funds to the Directors to hire substitute teachers to bring the 6th-8th graders back in the building; Joe seconded; the motion was approved by consensus.</p> <p>Matt made a motion that the Domain Council form an Executive Committee (made up of the committee chairs, Tala, and Kathleen) to review the work-from-home policy (and return to the Board to present it); Dawn seconded; the Board approved by consensus.</p>

	<p>emergency funds on staffing in-person learning; and (2) do we want to revisit work-from-home policies we created at the beginning of the year; and (3) if we do want to revisit those policies, what will be the criteria for evaluating work-from-home requests and will we use the same committee to consider that.</p> <p>There was an extensive discussion about the use of emergency funds to pay for substitutes, allow teachers to continue to work from home, and get the older students into the building for at least two hours per week. It was acknowledged that the entire \$45,000 would not need to be spent, as this budgeted through the end of the year and students would likely be back outdoors in the spring. However, there was an acknowledgment that a longer-term plan was needed, because the school could be facing the same circumstances next year.</p> <p>The Board agreed to allow Matt to convene an Executive Committee to revisit the work-from-home policy, but only if that committee reported back to the Board for final approval. Chris noted that he did not want to approve authorizing a committee that had final decision-making authority, because it could result in a plan requiring teachers to return to the building against their wishes.</p> <p>Tamara Kupfer discussed the issues raised in the letter submitted to the Board by parents and the need to have kids in the building more. James Boddy echoed these comments and stated that teachers could be legally required to return to the building and that all employees prefer to have clear expectations.</p>	
Committee Reports - Questions only	None	
New Business	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Directors' evaluations 2. Report from Personnel Committee 	

	3. Director hiring proposal	
Meeting Wrap-Up/ Evaluation	Next Meeting: December 9, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. Facilitator: Matt Snacks: N/A Drinks: N/A Newsletter blurb: Joe	
Review Action Items	Reviewed action items.	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.	

Tentative Agenda Topics for December 9, 2020 Board Meeting:

JEDI

Executive Committee Proposal re: Work-From-Home Policy

Directors' Evaluations

Report from Personnel Committee

Director Hiring Proposal

Dear Matt, Dawn, Kate and Lara,

I hope you had a peaceful and restorative weekend.

I am writing with urgency in support of planning for and implementation of more in-person learning for Hilltown students. Thank you for taking the time to consider this letter. The work and efforts on behalf of our kids by the Hilltown teachers and staff have been tremendous and are profoundly appreciated. Remote learning has significantly improved since March, but as you well know, it is neither a solution nor a replacement for school.

The two hours of in-person instruction thus far are the highlight of Elias and Vivienne's week - they love being live with teachers and classmates - making those crucial social-emotional connections; and they also clearly express that learning is easier and more enjoyable in school and off screens. Data support this is true for kids worldwide, as you know, and evidence of harms secondary to lost in-person education continues to grow.

Despite the valiant efforts of Hilltown's teachers, compared to in-person instruction, remote learning is isolated and lonely, more sedentary, frustrating due to tech challenges and glitches, and unsupervised. In our house, like so many others, while we are fortunate that both adults are working, we do not have the capacity to facilitate the moment-to-moment of our kids' remote school days or to greatly supplement their instruction. While an adult is in the house for urgencies and emergencies, during the school day our kids are essentially alone on a screen. I know our story is not unique, and many struggle far more with the balance of supporting their families and their children's education during the pandemic. It seems that given what we know about returning safely to the classroom, and Hilltown's successes to-date, a good foundation exists for us to build on progress and add more in-person instruction.

While hopes of a vaccine are real, the effects will more likely be a dimmer switch than an on-off button -- it may take years to fully suppress the virus, and as such, our current educational plans are simply not sustainable. I know you are aware of the state mandate to prioritize in-person learning, and of the local, national and international models that are working to safely do so, regardless of viral prevalence and incidence. Even at a time when some communities face a surge, we must still plan for, and implement as we can, more in-person learning at Hilltown.

The pandemic will continue to come in waves, and as a school we should be staying nimble — taking advantage of those moments when in-person is possible while planning for future possibilities. Certainly having a robust remote system as a back-up is essential, and again, is a strength that Hilltown has clearly developed. I am confident that more comprehensive and safe in-person plans can also be executed. Furthermore, upwards of 70% of families seem to support it, and many of us want to help bring it about.

It is clear from the recent Board meeting that a major limitation to more in-person stems from a personnel crisis. As a doctor and fellow frontline worker, I empathize with teacher concerns about safety and feeling uncomfortable at work. I have been grateful for the reasonable accommodations that my employer has made, and that have continued to evolve since the pandemic began. My industry, too, has made a crucial expansion to telemedicine - again, a reasonable accommodation when possible. However, I cannot perform a new medical admission to my program remotely, and there are many patients without the resources to complete a telemedicine visit. There are many others whose medical concerns need to be addressed in-person, who are better served by an in-person exam, evaluation, or conversation. Healthcare workers perform these visits despite feeling uncomfortable at times. It is our job, our professional obligation, and the right thing to do. I take comfort in knowing that a growing body of evidence supports the strategies that enable us to do this work safely. Reasonable accommodations must absolutely be made for teachers and educators as well, and a safe work environment at school is essential - masks, distancing, ventilation, and hand-hygiene are proven and appropriate.

Therefore, I wonder whether the school should be considering comfort level alone as the threshold for teachers and staff to work 100% remotely, which may ultimately not be in the best interests of our kids and our community. As other schools and workplaces seem to be doing, perhaps it makes sense to use medical exemptions as the primary basis to determine 100% remote work. We must unfortunately accept that there will be some level of risk for all of us for the near future, and as such, it seems prudent that the school set rational personnel policy now to help realize the goal of returning to increasing levels of in-person learning, and eventually bringing kids back into school full-time.

These are harrowing times with innumerable challenges. It is my sincere hope that as a community, we can make evidence-based, safe decisions to bring our kids to school. It is the right thing to do. Please let the parent community support and foster this crucial work.

Thank you again for considering this letter. Please let me know if you'd like more information, and how I might help in any way.

With gratitude,

Katie Krauskopf
Mom to Elias (Prisms) and Vivi (Oranges)

Hello Matt, Dawn, Laura, Kate, and Deirdre!

I hope you are all doing well and that you had a restful Thanksgiving. I know that there is much to discuss in the coming days and weeks, and based on some conversations Maggie and I have had with other parents, we wanted to share our perspective on why we would encourage you all, and the rest of the Board, to create policy that will allow more in person sessions at Hilltown in the coming weeks and months. For us in the Dietrich household right now, our strong feeling that policy should be created to allow more in person learning is based on two fairly distinct realities - one being very practical and related to the last 12 weeks of my professional experience and the other being very subjective and emotional based on the experience we have had with Sam in our home this fall.

First, the practical. As most of you know, we have just completed a 12 week fully in-person trimester here at Williston. We, like you all, did hours and hours of talking, planning, scrapping plans and creating new ones, and then pivoting from those newly created plans throughout the summer. The decision that we ultimately made to bring over 240 boarding students back to our campus, and then to invite approximately 200 day students to come take part daily in daily in-person learning starting in August was a daunting, anxiety-ridden, and hopeful one that we were not sure would work. Now, having completed a 12 week session, wherein we PCR tested every single student, faculty member, and staff member once a week (over 700 tests administered weekly) and having registered only two positive cases, we know that it did work and can work despite the national trends getting worse. Many boarding schools here in the Northeast, some with smaller day student populations than ours and some with even larger day student populations, experienced similar results. Almost all of those schools are utilizing a virtual model in December to limit the amount of travel for both international students and students who require public transportation to get to and from campus, but almost all of them are planning to return fully to on campus, in-person learning in January.

It would not be incorrect to cite the fact that Williston and Hilltown are in very different positions given the resources that we, as well as the other schools I noted above, have available to us in our planning and decision-making. Our testing costs alone are somewhat staggering and likely would be very difficult to implement for

a community like Hilltown. The important thing to note there, however, is that the testing that we utilized on a weekly basis did not prevent, in any way shape or form, the transmission of the COVID-virus between our students and faculty members. Those testing results simply confirmed, on a weekly basis, that the practices we were utilizing were working. While we do have the advent of increased space on our campus to utilize in creating safe classroom environments, we also accomplished the challenge of having approximately 240 boarding teenagers living on this campus 24 hours a day but still interacting daily with their day student peers who were going home to families who agreed to obey the Williston Compact and to utilize “safer at home” practices in order to make it work. In short, our situations are different and have different challenges, but with the commitment to maintaining safe practices, our data, and that of our peer schools all over New England, overwhelmingly and undeniably supports the ability to have in-person learning in a way that is safe for students, faculty, and staff.

While I do believe the practical is more important here, I want to convey the more emotional side of my strong desire for more in person learning. Sam Dietrich has always been, by and large, a fairly upbeat and positive young man. Whether he succeeds or fails in the academic or athletic realm, Maggie and I have always been proud of his resilience, his perspective, and his ability to see the importance of the bigger picture. Owen Dietrich, while being very different from his brother in many ways, is perhaps one of the most empathetic people we have ever met. As several of you know, he has a quirky style, but he is someone who thinks very deeply about how others should be treated and does his very best to be as inclusive as he can be in all cases.

I realize that everyone has stories of the challenges they have faced during the pandemic, particularly with families being forced to share space and time in ways that they had never had to before. The most important take away I think I will have from what has transpired over the course of the last nine months is the difference in the paths that Sam and Owen are currently on. Last May and June, having spent far too many hours together under one roof, on Zoom for school by day and trying to figure out how to cohabitate cohesively in all of the other hours of the day, Owen and Sam, like siblings around the world, were, to say it mildly, getting on each other's nerves. The summer, and the ability to get outside a bit more, with slightly

looser restrictions on social behavior, definitely improved life in the Dietrich household. As we began the school year, Owen was fully thrust back into his life as a student at Williston. While there were very strict restrictions on behavior, he was attending classes on a daily basis, seeing and interacting with his peers, and he even made the decision to run for the cross country team this fall. While Sam had the ability to participate on his lacrosse team this summer and fall and share some time together with Skylar and Reece in their “pod” that gets together on the Berrien’s porch on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, he has been relegated largely to interacting with people outside of our house via Zoom. Based on what has happened to him over the course of the last three months, Owen now has some developing friendships with a few boys from his class who he ran cross-country with, and he has developed some interesting, more intellectually mature relationships with a couple of his teachers. To say he is more mature, more outgoing, and more confident than he was even last spring would be a genuine understatement. Conversely, Sam has taken to utilizing the phrase “I feel dead inside” when asked about how his day was. While some online sessions with a counselor have helped Sam to develop better strategies around dealing with his anxiety, we have certainly seen that become an increasingly divisive factor in his ability to operate. He is more fidgety than usual, he is clingy with us whenever we are in his space, and he grows short and somewhat confrontational with us at times in ways that he never did before. On the whole, Sam is still the same good, kind-spirited person that he has always been, and we do believe he will be fine. But he is different.

While I know that other families have dealt with much more significant mental health issues, and are struggling much more with the financial realities that the pandemic has brought to their doorstep, I do think the contrast between where our two sons are with regard to their mental health and their overall outlook are notable and important, especially based on the way those outlooks have been shaped by the very different experiences they have had this fall with school. So, it is with that in mind, and with all due respect to the very complicated nature of this puzzle that you all are trying tirelessly to solve at Hilltown, that I do feel very strongly that it is time to develop policy that allows for more in-person teaching at Hilltown in the coming weeks and months. As I have said before, I am more than happy to help in any way that I can, based on the experience we have had here at Williston.

Thanks for reading, and best of luck with this decision.

All my best,
Chris

Lara, Matt, Kate and Dawn,

I am writing to you all as a professional who needs to be present, on site, to work my job as a veterinarian. I am immune compromised and very nervous about the contagion of Covid-19 at my work place. We all use as many precautions as are available to us at work, but nothing is fail safe. But we need to be there, our patients need us. Similarly, our kids need their teachers, classrooms, and other students.

We joined the community at Hilltown last year and I can not express how happy we were with our son's experience as a sixth grader. His teachers were incredible and we were very sad that he could not spend the whole year with them. But he had the opportunity to enjoy school, the wonderful teachers, and the curriculum that was so focused on the students. He really felt supported and truly appreciated the integrative approach to learning. He was thriving last year also because the student body was kind, accepting and happy to meet new kids like him from other schools. He was immediately ok at Hilltown.

Remote learning offers none of this. His teachers are still working very hard and we know they are trying to pursue the same wonderful curriculum. This, however, is impossible. They can not create a warm supportive learning environment remotely. Our son is often one of two kids with their video on in some classes, he is sometimes the only one. He is alone looking at himself and the teacher. The teacher calls on the non-video kids and they are not always there. I have a hard time with this situation.

When he goes to school for his two hours, he is excited, inspired and energized by the experience. The kids role play, see classmates, show teachers their hard work and feel affirmed. When they are remote, the feedback from both kids and teachers is minimal. Kids need others to know how hard to work, to see their potential, to see that their hard work is appreciated or that they need to work harder because others may model this for them. They thrive on comparison and feedback socially, emotionally and academically. This is not happening remotely. We are concerned about the long term effects of the remote experience.

We have relatives in both more rural and more urban areas that are offering at least two to five full days of school per week. With what we know scientifically, and the parameters that have worked in many other models in the world (and locally), sending kids to school is both very feasible and very necessary. We can do this safely with minimal risk. While I have not been able to attend all the meetings, I feel like there has been little clarity as to the plan for the kids. There is no information about moving toward more in-person learning.

Lastly, the surveys have been too vague. They ask if we would send our kids to school. They do not explain in what capacity school is being offered. Can you offer two to four half days, full days? Two hours a week is very difficult to manage for most families and it is not a half day. If the hours were more manageable like true half days (3hours) or full days, more people can manage this schedule. The last survey was actually confounding. The wording suggested that our kids would be at a disadvantage if they chose more in person learning. The survey felt like it

prompted people to choose more remote learning due to the disadvantage stated before the question. This begs the question, how were the teachers surveyed? Was it clear cut?

Our kids need their teachers, their cohorts, and the beautiful Hilltown community. While I understand the pandemic has created a complexity of challenges for schools, I feel in person learning is critical for our children. This is similar to our pets needing their veterinarians, sick people needing doctors, and all of us needing groceries. There are many different front line workers. Please consider a plan to help the kids get back to the classroom so they can experience the amazing education that we know Hilltown can offer.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Hayhurst



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Domain Directors' Report December, 2020

1. This letter introduced our Community Listening Session on 12/2/2020:

Dear Community,

If the path of schooling through this pandemic were obvious, we would not be here tonight. We're here to talk together because we have a true problem. How to make school work for everyone is not just a problem of perception or opinion. There are many layers to our situation and the conflict is real.

If the way to proceed were obvious, we would not have such disparate plans running in six neighboring schools and districts. Easthampton, at their Board of Health's recent recommendation, has ceased all in-person learning. Northampton, at their Board of Health's recent recommendation, still plans to roll out a hybrid schedule in January. The Amherst school district is remote. The Hampshire Regional school district is hybrid. The Williston School has maintained in-person learning while the Smith College Campus School has been all remote so far.

It is worth noting that Pioneer Valley Performing Arts School and the Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School have both been remote all year, with the exception of students with highest needs, and Four Rivers Charter School in Greenfield has maintained two hours of outdoor "crew" time per student and is otherwise entirely remote. As far as charter schools in our area go, we have been pioneers of on-site learning, and our reputation for doing it deliberately and creatively has led multiple school districts (private, public and charter) to ask us for copies of our current plan. I would like to reinforce what has been said in earlier communications: the fact that our trials have succeeded and that our hybrid model has proceeded is a testament to the truly tireless work and ingenuity of staff and the cooperation of parents and students.

As we begin to talk and listen to one another tonight, I hope to convey that in this situation, our biggest mandate is to be responsible. We are not in a 'majority rules' situation. We need to be able to prioritize and respond to the needs of students, families, and staff. All stories need to be heard, and one solution will not fit all. The equity issues, no matter what scenario we are in, are significant and exacerbated this year. Some parents want their children to see other students and socialize. Other parents want to keep their children home and pod as a family. Some parents are glad to drive to school as many days as possible. Others have no access to transportation. Some parents have partners and friends to help with schooling and childcare. Some parents are isolated. Some families request more structure. Other families request more flexibility. Some parents aren't worried about the curriculum. Others are concerned about the curriculum. Every individual story is a true story. Everyone is right.

The admin team is invested in the whole community's experience, collectively and individually. While we know that one plan will not fit all, we believe in the principles of planning we set for ourselves last summer and we trust that following them through this disorienting time will get us through. Gathering together as a community to listen and learn about the year is one of the principles we planned on:



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Principles of Planning

Organize around a few shared values. Surveys of parents and teachers yielded the same top priorities:

- a. safety
- b. equity
- c. creating social connections and supporting social-emotional wellness
- d. engaging students, whatever it takes
- e. teaching basic skills

Develop a few common structures and use them consistently.

- a. morning meeting and advisories
- b. 1:1 and small group check-ins
- c. expectations for participation
- d. caregiver communication

Rely on our mission to strengthen our vision of virtual learning.

- a. integrate arts and offer hands-on, interdisciplinary learning projects
- b. build community and cultivate individual voices

Embrace the organizational learning curve. Plan on evaluating what is working and what needs adjusting periodically throughout the year.

- a. respond to COVID data as it changes
- b. start slowly and add gradually
- c. offer community meetings to hear from all members of the community
- d. set dates for periodic program assessment

When allocating limited in-person teaching time and building/site use, prioritize relationship building (teacher-student and student-student) and supporting students with highest needs.

- a. use in-person time to build relationships
- b. use the building to provide a place for students with the highest needs to access their learning and supports

We look forward to sharing the [survey data](#) with you all tonight. The comments included in the slide show are a representative sample and the pie charts provide summary data. *((Included in the 12/8 Newsletter))*

After looking at the data, we will move into breakout sessions to talk about our hopes for our children and the school.



HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

2. Here are the summary responses from breakout groups at the Coop meeting on December 2, 2020:

Question: What are your hopes for your student this winter?

Group 3:

- Speed and ease. Continue to get through without much pain.
- Student learning - more overall learning time and content & curriculum.
- Keeping the curriculum up and consistency with routine.
- For a long time I wanted curriculum to be a priority. That has changed over the last couple of months as they are really sad and down and the social isolation is wearing on my kids. I would like more in person time for my kids and would like for the number of hours to increase from two hours to three, especially if days cannot be added.
- Similar comment to above - position on curriculum versus more in person time has changed. Now wanting more in person interaction due to isolation and too much screen time with remote learning.
- Similar comment to above - wanted more curriculum and now wants more in person schooling because my child is only happy on in person days.
- Concern for equity for remote kids if there is more in person time.
- Isolation is hard. Screen time is hard and causes head aches for child. My child is a different child when he has onsite learning. 2 hours per week does not feel like any sort of balance for the kids. Can we at least increase the number of hours they are onsite? More hours when they do come in (from 2 - 3 hours). Can we utilize the TAs differently or hire more subs?
- As much in person time as possible because of social isolation.
- Appreciative of the time my child is in school. As a Blues parent the more time in school is much better for my child.
- My original thought was not to add more in person time due to equity. My primary concern is everyone stays healthy. Second to that is mental health of the children (that switched from curriculum in second). Lastly, the curriculum.



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Group 2:

We had a range of parents with children from different grades, and one teacher in our group:

*Parents expressed tremendous gratitude for the teachers and administrators for all the work and care they are putting into figuring out how to teach this year

*Many parents expressed concern for the well-being and safety of Hilltown staff *Many parents expressed feeling torn about increasing in-person vs. public health, and an appreciation for the complexity of the situation, and that everyone's needs are different

*Every parent in the group expressed the desire, ideally, for increased in-person time for social (mostly) reasons. Many parents noted that their children love the on-site time they do have.

*On-site has been hard for some children if they are not in a cohort with their friends

*It has been difficult for newer students (Prisms) to adjust with such limited on-site time

*Yet if more in-person means less curriculum, that was concerning for some.

*And if more in-person means that all-remote students get less access to teachers/instruction/structure, that was a concern (re. equity)

*Some parents are seeing concerns with their children's mental health due to lack of socialization.

*Some parents are also concerned about the rising cases of COVID and wondering if now is the time to increase in-person time

*Many parents would like a long-range plan that includes increasing on-site time, and that is evidenced-based, and data-driven, not fear-based. They would like to be in-person in a safe way.

*Many parents expressed the desire for more creative ways to meet in-person, either by extending the school day, or offering more opportunities to be in community through extracurriculars

*There was concern expressed that a student in the survey reported that some students are not always being great about wearing their masks

*There should be a way to ensure that students always have their cameras on

*The teacher in the group talked about the logistics of managing the current schedule, and what it actually looks like in the school trying to manage all the students and ensure they are abiding by all the safety standards. They also talked about being aware of the social/emotional needs as well as the academic needs, and how to balance that. And that many teachers are taking care of elderly parents or have their own health concerns, which makes teaching in-person a scary prospect.



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Group 1:

- 7th - maintain academic confidence, social interaction and progress, learning something, stay safe - not as concerned re stay on track - willingness and confidence re learning.
- 4-5th - continue to like school - feel connected to community; parent is a teacher at Hampshire with 7th graders and they have adapted content goal to 60%; feel confident and not like they are floundering; still feel like they have friends; healthy mentally - impact of isolation is concerning.
- Blues/ K - hope she can do less on zoom, very intense to keep her engaged.
- Yellow - less concerned with academics and focused on emotional health, being part of a community is important, asynchronous is challenging.
- (2) different 8th families - concern re being prepared for transition to high school...
 - not just in diminished academic content... but critical executive functioning and independence skill building especially... plus a need for confidence and skill to navigate socially and be motivated to engage/ learn in future.
 - Building habits and skills for learning - and resilience to be able to handle increased academic and social rigor.

General discussion:

- 4-5th - would like to see one more day - the one day a week is a major thing for their family.
- What models are being used in other schools that we could learn from? Could this help us to think about fresh ways to balance both in person and remote learners at the same time?
- Do we have an idea of what the potential plans are for the future? What are the tradeoffs - ie if we do X then there will be less Y. If we change models what would be the differences to what we are doing now? Parents need more information to understand the choices.
- New family - recognizing the value of hearing other family experiences and stories - honoring how each is true and right as Lara noted.
- Social emotional challenges especially for new students to school trying to make connections.

Goal - process of learning to learn... confidence and interest to figure it out and be a learner in the future - combined with social/ emotional health is critical.



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3. The K-8 School Schedule as of 12/7/2020

	Mon Morning Meeting K-3 8:15-8:30 4-5 8:30	Tues K-5 Morning Meeting 8:15-8:30	Wed	Thurs K-5 Morning Meeting 8:15-8:30	Fri K-5 Morning Meeting 8:15-8:30
Onsite	On site: Arrival 8:45-9:00 K/1 A 9:15-11:15 G/Y A 9:15-11:15 R/O A 9:15-11:15	On site: Arrival 8:45-9:00 K/1 B 9:00-11:15 G/Y B 9:00-11:15 R/O B 9:00-11:15	9:00 All Sch.	On site: Arrival 8:45-9:00 K/1 A 9:15-11:15 G/Y A 9:15-11:15	On site: Arrival 8:45-9:00 K/1 B 9:15-11:15 G/Y B 9:15-11:15
Remote specials	8:45-9:25 B/I B Atelier/Music 9:40-10:20 B/I B Atelier/Music Scana w/ GY B Remote student support 8:45 Scana B/I B Scana G/Y B (making meaning)	8:45-9:25 B/I A Atelier/Music 9:40-10:20 B/I A Atelier/Music Scana w/ GY A Remote student support 8:45 Scana B/I A Scana G/Y A (making meaning)	10:00 Mini courses	9:00 Reds Atelier/Music 10:00 Oranges Atelier/Music Remote student support 9:00 Scana B/I B 10:00 Scana G/Y B	9:00 Oranges Atelier/Music 10:00 Reds Atelier/Music Remote student support 9:00 Scana B/I A <u>10:00 Scana G/Y A</u>
Break					
Onsite	On site: K/1 B 1:00-3:00 Purples A 1:00-3:00 Prisms West 1:00-3:00 B/I 12:30 MM A G/Y 1:30 Atelier/Music B	On site: K/1 A 1:00-3:00 Purples B 1:00-3:00 Prisms East 1:00-3:00 B/I 12:30 MM B G/Y 1:30 Atelier/Music A		On site: K/1 B 1:00-3:00 B/I 12:30 A/M A G/Y Atelier/Music B	On site: K/1 A 1:00-3:00 B/I 12:30 A/M B G/Y 1:30 Atelier/Music A



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4. Winter Fair 2020 included distanced versions of most of the parts of a traditional Winter Fair, though we miss the performances and the food!

The Hilltown 2020 Winter Fair

Crafts! Student and adult members of our community made how-to videos of easy to make gifts and treats that you can do at home! The link is on the school's website.

Book Fair with High Five Books

Wreath-making! at school, outdoors, masks required. \$10-15 each

Winter Gear Clothing Swap! at school, indoors, distanced, masks required.



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Domain Council Meeting Minutes- November 20, 2020

9:00 am Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86426378361?pwd=WDDjMk1pMHJaWUNpOXJDUFhYMUIjUT09>

Present: Matt Dube, Kate Saccento, Lara Ramsey, Deirdre Arthen, Dawn Reesman, Dan Klatz

Regrets: None

Topic	Discussion	Action
Agenda for 12/9 BOT Meeting	Matt requested agenda items for the December 9th Board of Trustees Meeting. Suggested Items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote and In Person Learning Update • Director's Evaluations due in 2020-2021 School Year • JEDI Committee Update • WFH Procedure Update Will adjust the agenda closer to the date of the meeting.	Matt to draft agenda and send it to the team for review.
WFH (Work From Home) Procedure	We confirmed that we currently have a WFH procedure - not a policy. A policy, if determined to be needed, would help define what are the specific reasons someone can work from home during in person teaching time.	Executive Committee to meet and discuss the WFH Procedure and to determine if a policy needs to be written and approved.
Review action items		Done
Tentative agenda topics for next meeting	Personnel Committee Proposal Continue discussion on remote & in person learning for 2020-2021 School Year	
Next meeting time/date/location		Friday, Dec. 18, 9:00 a.m. Zoom link found on school calendar
Adjournment		Meeting adjourned at 10 a.m.



JEDI Committee Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2020 7:30pm
<https://smith.zoom.us/j/98183352665>

Present: Karen Sise, Jen Matos, Joe Wyman, Kathleen Szegda

Regrets: none

Topic	Discussion	Action (if necessary)
Letter Response	Parents emailed resources to Jen. Discussed how to advertise request for other resources and make list available for families to view. Suggested mention in newsletter with link to doc.	Jen will check with Grace about how to make doc viewable only to hilltown families and will get it posted in the newsletter.
Board JEDI training	Need to take proposal for \$3160 to finance committee for approval for JEDI training. Karen emailed Safire and Romina to find out times they are generally available so we can send a Doodle poll to the board now for potential times in January. Discussed how to keep training up to date in the future and make training part of onboarding for new board members. Jen will be able to offer the training in future years but wants to be a participant this time. Discussed suggestion from the board to collaborate with other schools to share the cost of training. Given our short time frame it may not be feasible but we'd also like to have the training be team building with just our BOT.	Jen will write up a proposal and take it to finance on December 2. Karen will send out a Doodle poll to the board once she hears back from the trainers.
Equity Audit	Joe sent a resource list to JEDI members. We will look to start the equity audit process in	All will review equity audit



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	<p>the Spring (March or April) as a culmination of the pilot year for JEDI and in preparation for a new Long Range Plan process.</p> <p>Will suggest to BOT that LRP revolve around equity and diversity.</p>	<p>materials to be discussed at next meeting.</p>
Review Action Items	<p>Reviewed action items.</p>	
Tentative Agenda Topics for Next Meeting	<p>Equity audit JEDI training</p>	
Next Meeting Date/Time/Location	<p>Thursday, December 10 7:30pm https://smith.zoom.us/j/94695728544</p>	
Adjournment	<p>Meeting adjourned at 7:58pm</p>	



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Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes

Wed., Nov. 18, 2020 7:30am (holiday on 11/25) at 7:30am

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88069674816?pwd=Szg0UlgxV1FKUVNXVFJHaXhtRzBIQT09>
Passcode: coffeetime

Present: Nicole Grinaski, Emily Lees, Jen Matos, Kelly Woods, Lara Ramsey

Regrets:

Topic	Time	Discussion	Action
Meeting Roles	2 mins	Facilitator: Kelly Notetaker: Lara/Kelly Timekeeper: Jen	
Policy regarding in-person staffing during Covid	35 mins	<p>Discussion re clarifying role of this Committee with regards to advising/policy development, guidance. Emergency decision making needs to be made by the Board, Domain, Administration Team in consultation with attorney as needed.</p> <p>Lara shared that she and Kate will be presenting an update to the Board this evening. Administration goal is to keep a minimum of 2 hours in person for all children. Data shows transmission in school is very low. Some staff members are concerned about coming inside. However, Child Watch weather tool will guide outdoor time according to temperature and windchill. School must have plan for cold children - equity regarding access to warm enough clothing. No dress code for Prisms. A plan is needed to address staffing if we are to come inside.</p> <p>Unclear when not coming in is a personal choice or a medical need. Line between personal choice vs. medical much needed for policy formation. Questions re: type of time being used for which decisions of time... depending on role (art vs. classroom teacher example.)</p> <p>Lara shared financial data re costs associated</p>	Lara will bring conversation to the Board meeting.



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		<p>with increased staffing to provide in person teaching.</p> <p>Nicole reminds us that having subs brings more exposure to students and staff.</p> <p>Kelly reminds us that we have legal resources to help us vet our plans and proposals.</p> <p>Affirms that the Personnel Committee is a sounding board but not the final authority for emergency contingencies.</p> <p>State is providing guidance - students in school are a priority of the state. There is not additional financial support available.</p> <p>Letter from a parent outlines the data clearly pointing to the fact that we should be in-person.</p> <p>Discussion re what data is available to inform the decision. Recognition that emotion is a real part of this experience and decision for individuals.</p> <p>Will ask Board tonight who is making the policy re work-from-home. And what is the reasonable accommodation. Hiring another person to do the job is typically not considered a reasonable accommodation.</p> <p>Recognition that early guidance was to try to make adjustments, but we have run out of low cost accommodations and adjustments for individuals, and this is now creating a conflict/stressor as more universal policies need to be put in place.</p> <p>Families are communicating significant interest in on-site learning. There may be families who are not interested in coming inside that we haven't heard from.</p>	
Annual goals check-in - including JEDI	15 mins	<p>New-staff folder has been created.</p> <p>Includes a checklist of things to do when</p>	



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<p>goal check-in:</p> <p>Onboarding packet update</p> <p>Review of research gathered to date regarding bias, assessment and best practice. Consideration of next steps and actions to begin?</p>		<p>onboarding, a staff list, a glossary of Hilltown terms, a school calendar, and organizational chart, and a list of benefits. It also includes all of the onboarding paperwork (I-9, W-4, CORI, Fingerprinting forms, direct deposit, etc.)</p> <p>Nicole is making packets to have on hand.</p> <p>Note this is not a prospective employee packet - it will make a good start to begin to create a prospective packet/ materials.</p> <p>MHC student will be working on a website audit as a prospective parent and employee with a JEDI lens. She also attended the Youth Conversation.</p> <p>Kelly shared a recent article re diversity recruiting checklist: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/part-i-ii-leaders-do-you-really-want-increase-diversity-tardy/?trk=eml-email-series-follow-newsletter-01-hero-1-title link&midToken=AQEWLqVVa-uquA&fromEmail=fromEmail&ut=3CMpVYNGcw mFw1</p>	<p>Lara will work with Mt. Holyoke intern to identify needed improvements for our website.</p>
<p>New Business</p>			
<p>Review action items</p>	<p>2 mins</p>	<p>Lara & Kate will bring conversation about work from home to the Board meeting.</p> <p>Lara will work with Mt. Holyoke intern to identify needed improvements for our website.</p>	
<p>Tentative agenda topics for next meeting</p>	<p>3 mins</p>	<p>JEDI Updates & Discussion</p> <p>TBD</p>	
<p>Next meeting time/date/location</p>		<p>Wed., Dec. 23 7:30am (*holiday on 12/30) Zoom link found on school calendar</p>	
<p>Adjournment</p>		<p>8:26am</p>	