



Highline Academy

Charter Schools

MINUTES

Full Board of Directors Meeting

June 09, 2025

6:15 pm

The meeting was held at HASE and able to be observed virtually via Zoom using this [link](#)

MISSION: We exist to foster a diverse and equitable community of youth and adults striving together for academic, personal and civic excellence.

VISION: Inclusive excellence in public education.

The Board uses a series of qualifiers, where appropriate, to help clarify the nature of each presentation/report.

1. The decision has been made and updates are provided (Inform)
2. Input is needed to assist the board to make the best decision (Discussion/Input)
3. Brainstorming is needed to help identify all options (Brainstorm)
4. Input and/or decision is assigned to a Special Committee (Small Group)
5. The decision is ready for vote (Vote)

ATTENDANCE

Board Executive Committee:

Ambar Suero, Co-Chair
Katherine Casey, Co-Chair
Kaylee Hart, Treasurer
Annie Bielecki, Secretary

Board Members:

Alexander Landau, Board Member
Joe Whitfield, Board Member
Drew Goltermann, Board Member
Kelly Fleming, Board Member
Nikea Bland, Board Member
Kenny Smith, Board Member
Grace Nailing, Board Member (virtual)

Highline Ex-Officio Members:

Chris Ferris, Highline Academy Executive Director
Sarah Verni-Lau, Highline Academy Southeast Principal
Vanessa Rodriguez, Highline Academy Northeast Principal
Alex Bowdoin, Outreach and Communication
Arizona Alli, Dir Communications and Development
Jaie King, Director of Operations
Sara Taylor, HR (virtual)

Other:

Bill Knous, Incoming Board Member
Will Anderson, Incoming Board Member
Jess Ridgeway, Ed Partners
Erica Burns, Ed Partners
Darien Key, Teacher (virtual)
Heather miles (virtual)
MTerres, new board member (virtual)
Carolyn Gallegos, HR (virtual)

Absent:

Ramone Carson, Board Member
Sloane Macy, Board Member
Katondra Dunn, Board Member

Topic	Presenter	Goals	Outcome
<p>Call to Order – Ambar Suero – Call to Order (6:32 pm) Quorum Establish A quorum of the Board was established. The agenda was adopted with no changes.</p> <p>Mission Moment Kenny Smith read aloud the mission and vision statement. Kenny is stepping down after 6 years on the Board. He challenges the incoming Board to continue leaning into the mission and vision and to stand strong as the times get more difficult.</p>			
<p>Consent Agenda – Ambar Suero – Governance – Vote (6:32 pm) Minutes from the February meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A motion was made by Ambar and seconded by Joe to approve the May, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously. 			
<p>See BOD Packet for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Report ● End of year academic data- Reach Up report ● Strategic Plan overview ● HR update ● Minutes from May meeting 			
<p>Public Comment (6:35 pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arizona framed the public comment. ● Darien Key read a comment from HANE- Thank you to the Board for approving the bonus and allowing us to have committees to choose the new curriculum. Staff is excited and looking forward to starting fresh. ● Darien Key read a letter from staff member Yadira Pantoja- She expressed concern for the new pay scale for flex teachers, disheartened to learn that her personal salary was being lowered as a result. Has been a valued member of HANE for 11 years. Respectfully asks the Board to consider a grandfather clause or something that would protect current staff whose salary is being lowered. 			
<p>Reach In Committee - Chris Ferris - Inform (6:40 pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction of new members ● Reach Awards for Board Members ● Appreciation of members leaving 			
<p>E.D. Update - Chris Ferris - Inform (6:48 pm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic Plan- Ericka Burns - Ericka shared the Strategic Plan for the next 5 years for Highline. Her presentation can be found HERE. ● 4 strategic priorities - 1) Rooted in Purpose, 2) One Highline, High Expectations, 3) Strong Instruction, Clear Measures, 4) Engaged Learners, Bright Futures. A short discussion ensued about these priorities, including from Alex on how to engage families specifically, WHO do we have high expectations for. Katherine pointed out a lack of directness in the stated goals of equity at Highline, and particularly racial equity. She suggests that the Board will have to be very strategic in light of the current environment. Ambar suggests we define what “every student” means to us. How to not lose the essence of who we are as an org. Joe pointed out that we can call ourselves any language we want but if we’re not delivering on our anti-racist beliefs then people will be upset. Alex emphasized the need to understand the background of these students. Kaylee asked how deeply we want to communicate this to staff and when- Ericka recommends sharing at the beginning of the 			

school year with regular checkins. Kenny asked about advocacy at the district level. Annie suggested kids need to be able to advocate and speak intelligently about anti-racism, homophobia, etc and that it should be a part of the Portrait of a Graduate. Kenny mentioned re-defining what One Highline means. Katherine said we need to be mindful of what context we are living in. It might be helpful to name the conditions for success in order to attain these goals. Have clarity around the tools for implementation- be able to stay nimble. Bill and Ericka stressed realistic goals. Kenny asked about staff retention- is there anything that we can do other than pay teachers more to keep teachers around. Ericka mentioned it's a bunch of little things-aligning our goals and priorities will help with staff retention because it will clarify what Highline is and what it needs.

- HR Update- Carolyn Gallegos shared a [SLIDE DECK](#) about talent acquisition, HR, and Employee Engagement. Chris pointed out that the net promoter score is significantly higher than it was mid-year and credited Sarah for a big turnaround in school culture. Staff Diversity continues to be a strength in our org. Joe pointed out that the staff diversity (51%) has more than doubled since he became a Board Member. A short discussion ensued about the Perception of Diversity score in the engagement survey. Key Themes from Staff- Desire for Accountability and Recognition, Concerns about PD and planning, discipline and student behaviour, instructional support.

REACH Out Committee - Annie Bielecki - Inform (7:54 pm)

- [Annual Report](#) Review - Given by Arizona and Alex
- Board Giving Totals and Donor Totals

Reach UP Committee - Drew Golterman - Inform (8:05)

- End of year data- Drew shared a [slide deck](#).
- HANE- Scores are trending positive, more information will be provided at the Retreat. SPF is green, ELA data is showing constant growth. Math data doesn't show the same pattern but still shows an upward trajectory. STAR growth scores are very strong. No major discrepancies in growth among subgroups. MLLs are outpacing their non-MLL peers in growth. We feel confident about the HANE UIP goals. Academic achievement is still TBD but growth is looking good.
- HASE - Increased number of students by 60. Demographics on HASE campus has changed pretty significantly in the past 5 years, increasing FRL, MLL, SPED and minority populations. 31% MLL students entering HASE have little to no English or previous schooling. More students will be requiring the READ act. STAR growth has gone down. HASE is not quite meeting UIP goals yet, HASE is aware of the challenges and rising to meet them. Chris mentioned that this year's UIP goals will be different due to the quick change the school has seen over the past few years. William asked about GT students, Sarah mentioned that the data for GT students will soon be able to be separated. Bill asked about what changes we can anticipate in the coming years, demographic-wise. HANE GT started at 50 students and ended at 92 students this year. Vanessa pointed out that the SEL learning at HANE was elevated as well.

Old Business - Chris Ferris - Inform (8:23 pm)

- No old business

Reminders/Announcements - Annie Bielecki - Inform (8:24 pm)

- Board Retreat will be on August 1 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Adjournment - Ambar Suero - Adjourn Meeting - Vote (8:24 pm)

With no further business up for discussion, a motion was made by Ambar and seconded by Nikea to adjourn the

meeting. The motion passed unanimously.