



AGENDA

Board of Directors Meeting Full Board Meeting

**Monday, May 18, 2026
6:15 pm**

The meeting will be held virtually [here via Zoom](#)

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)

Board members present:

Kelly Fleming
Katherine Casey
Joe Whitfield
Jessica Martin
Bill Knous
Dr. Will Anderson
Ambar Suero
Ramone Carson
Ashley Andersen
Matthew Telles
Grace Nailing
Sloan Macy
Kaylee Hart

Leah-Michael

Staff Present:

Sarah Verni-Lau
Vanessa Rodriguez
Peter Nyland
Chris Ferris
Arizona Alli
Ilyse Beckerman
Heather Miles
Maya
Dave
Amanda
Carolyn Gallegos

Topic	Presenter	Qualifier/ Outcome
Call to Order- 5 minutes • Quorum Establish • Agenda Confirm Quorum established	Katherine Casey	Call to Order
Mission and Vision - 5 mins • Mission and Vision Restated • Highline is a Proud DPS Charter School	Grace Nailing	Inform
Consent Agenda - 2 minutes • Motion to approve the minutes from the April 9 and 27th meetings • 26-27 Board calendar	Katherine Casey	Vote - board approved unanimously
See BOD Packet for: • HANE & HASE School Dashboards • Budget to Actuals through April 2026 • Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Graduate final versions • Stoplight- Thriving Through Transition • ED Report • Slate of Nominees for Officer Positions • End of Year Events		
Public Comment - Anonymous comment received and read by Ilyse Bekerman Dear members of the Highline Board and community, I address you via public comment and anonymously, because you continue to share with staff a grievance process that is neither neutral nor objective. I respect you, but have you not realized by now that if people keep exposing their issues to you in public comment and anonymously that perhaps there is something wrong with the grievance	Arizona	Inform

process?

The grievance process is basically to tell the person that is hurting you that you are getting hurt. The process needs serious revamping and you, as the board need to make sure that staff feels heard and empowered. I hope that with the new executive director you will take on more oversight of what Dr. Lewis does and how she will be managing the principals at Highline. Please note that Dr. Lewis already has a personal relationship with one of the principals at Highline and you should make sure that this does not affect her work and her need to be “neutral and objective” in her position.

I understand that for years you have believed and worked under the assumption that the principals at Highline can do no wrong, but I hope that with the hiring of a new executive director, we can start directing Highline in a new way where we can be receptive to the staff. Remember that the staff are the ones who take care of the students, and we need to have a good leader that can direct us with clear directive, integrity and empathy. We cannot continue to ignore the issues that are forcing so many good teachers to leave Highline, only to be replaced with teachers that are inadequate (which is also what creates so many discipline issues, especially in the middle school).

We need you to please open your eyes to the obvious, poor management is draining us. Some of us wish we could leave, but we are so close to retirement that leaving would affect our retirement funds and we cannot afford to be targeted or put into baseless PIPs. Some of us have to carry our grade level because the new hires are not ready to take on the jobs that they are given. Please help us, we need you to lead and give us back our dignity and integrity.

Highline used to be a place that I was proud to recommend to former colleagues and parents. Now if someone asks me about the school as either a work place or an educational entity I do not feel comfortable recommending it. It is sad to share this with you, but you must know that I am disappointed with the work you have done as a board in the past years and that we need to come to terms with the fact that Highline is no longer the most desirable school in town. Our numbers are declining and parents are not happy with how we handle issues.

I hope next year will bring a new and fresh start and that staff and the entire Highline community can once again be proud of our school and our management.

Second public comment: I am writing to express my concerns and advocate regarding the Full Time Employment (FTE) agreement between Highline Academy Northeast (HANE) and Denver Public

Schools Department of Mental Health. As far as I understand, HANE plans to continue with a 1.0 School Social Worker and a 1.0 School Psychologist (2.0 FTE). I am advocating for funding to contract for additional FTE hours. There are 134 students supported by IEPs currently enrolled at HANE, which is greater than 22% of the entire student population (597); the current IEP caseload for mental health is 71 students, with 65 receiving direct service minutes. Of those 65 students, 34 are supported by a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in their IEP; two of those students are also supported by a Crisis Intervention Plan (CIP). In efforts to be efficient with time some students are put in small groups of as many as four, but larger groups are less impactful to individual needs and not sustainable to create lasting impacts on student growth. It does not feel good to say that most weeks I am probably not meeting all of my IEP minutes, although this is not something I can confidently report, as I have also not been able to keep up with my Medicaid service documentation; both of these are high priority, legal requirements of my job that I have been unable to complete this year due to other, higher priority needs (safety protocols (mental health crises, behavioral crises), and IEP/504 meetings). Highline's current staffing model includes a 1.0 School Counselor, 2.0 Behavior Interventionists, and also partners with Maria Droste Counseling Center (MD) to provide play-based therapy during the school day. While there are benefits to the MD partnership, the current School Psychologist and I have advocated to use those funds for a another mental health SSP or DPS School Psychology Intern; a DPS provider could provide what MD does, as well as provide IEP services, complete safety protocols, and respond to crises. I have been tracking this data informally for approximately the last year and I have found I worked at least 35 hours outside of my contracted work time completing special education paperwork this school year. For reference, the anticipated time needed to complete one of the reevaluations that I recently completed is approximately 22 hours per DPS estimates. In my six years at HANE, two center programs have been added which inherently increases the caseload for all Special Service Providers (SSPs); there are currently three center programs at HANE. Having previously been an SSP assigned exclusively to an Affective Needs (AN) Center, I can compare and believe the needs for the MultiIntensive-Autism (MI-A) Center to be equal if not greater. It is frustrating to see FTE increase for other SSPs as the need increases, yet HANE maintains 2.0 FTE for mental health SSPs. This year alone, I have responded to 37 crisis calls, ranging from 5-90 minutes in duration with an average time of 28.4 minutes per crisis. Despite this, other SSPs have increased, such as Speech, while Mental Health has not.		
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Additionally, outside of anyone's control, the School Psychologist who has worked at HANE for the past five years will be relocating this summer. I am also the only SSP returning to HANE next year. Additionally, two crisis responders (Assistant Principal of Culture and School Counselor) have resigned in the past three months. This amount of turnover will surely result in a greater need for me personally, at least in the beginning of the upcoming school year as they all acclimate to the school, systems, staff, and students. HANE is a Title I school. Families in this community require support with a wide variety of supports including but not limited to housing, transportation, immigration status, and truancy prevention. Providing these supports at times that work best for families results in less flexibility for rescheduling missed service minutes. HANE previously employed a Culture and Community Liaison, but she is the Principal now! This results in fewer colleagues to delegate community support tasks to. There is something truly special about the HANE community. There is incredible benefit in knowing a student and their family over the course of so many years. I am invested in maintaining the positive trajectory that many of my students are on and I know that this would be more attainable with additional FTE via an additional School Social Worker, School Psychologist, or School Psychology Intern. I appreciate your time and consideration.		
Principal Update - 10 Minutes • EOY highlights • Have seen more turnover Ambar Suero shared deep gratitude to staff members HANE Updates: • Strong emphasis on effective mathematics instruction, rooted in CGI, along with consistent implementation and execution of the new math curriculum led to higher student academic growth and proficiency. • Addition of instructional LEAP indicators (I.6, I.7) ensured a continued focus on differentiation and academic feedback for all students. • 31 MLL students qualified for redesignation to exit Multilingual Education Services (3rd-5th) • Expanded opportunities for student voice and leadership through Student Council, civic engagement projects, and community service opportunities. Each grade level had 2+ Field Trips this year. • Built a new partnership with The Links, Incorporated (Black Women Service Organization) who supported students and families. • Strengthened family and community relationships by hosting grade level student celebrations of learning at the end of each semester. • Continued implementation of enrichment opportunities and	Sarah Verni-Lau Vanessa Rodriguez	Inform

extracurricular programming that supported whole-child development and joyful student experiences.

- Intentionally implemented elements from Dr. Anderson's rubric to continue building strong culture of belonging, where students, families, and staff feel connected, valued, and empowered.
- Continued to prioritize inclusive educational practices, social-emotional learning, and restorative to ensure students felt safe, seen, and supported.

HASE Updates:

- Successful renewal visit with "effective" ratings across all observable areas, final recommendation will happen Winter 2026/27
- Strong implementation of a new MLE curriculum resulting in significant growth in ACCESS data and the highest number of students up for redesignation since before the pandemic
- Implementation of new writing and math curriculums K-8
- Built a stronger intentionally collaborative community through monthly student service meetings which brings together grade level teachers, interventionists, mental health, behavior, MLL, and admin
- Implementation of a behavior system including the launch of DeansList and the onboarding of two behavior interventionists
- Revamped professional development structure to respond to staff requests for personalized PD

HANE Major Improvement Strategies Update:

- **MIS 1: Develop and Implement a Clear Vision for Instruction**
- **a.** Established shared expectations for planning, material use, and lesson execution across grade levels and content areas.
- **b.** Supported teachers through planning protocols, observation tools (LEAP, IPG, Elements of Learning Spaces Rubric), and feedback cycles aligned to the school's instructional vision.
- **MIS 2: Integrate Data Protocols using Formative Assessment into Coaching and Planning**
- **a.** Defined assessment expectations by content area and connected data use directly to instructional planning and delivery.
- **b.** Clearly identified formative data sources, including exit tickets, curriculum-embedded checks, and ANet items, and consistently used them to inform instructional planning.
- **c.** Trained and supported coaches in regularly analyzing formative data with teachers during planning meetings to drive student grouping, reteaching strategies, and task adjustments.
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- **MIS 3: Operationalize MTSS with Clear Roles, Data Protocols, and Follow-Through**
- **a.** Defined and implemented the MTSS data cycle, including referral processes, hypothesis development, progress monitoring, and exit criteria. Tier II is an area of focus next year

• b. Redefined roles for MTSS team members, aligned documentation practices, and identified student outcome benchmarks. • c. Academic Interventionists facilitated monthly MTSS progress check-ins with supporting artifacts, including intervention plan reviews and student growth data. HASE Rock Update: Rock 1: By May 2026, 75% of students receiving data-driven small group instruction at least twice per week in math and literacy will demonstrate a minimum of 1 year of growth on their third party assessment compared to their Fall 2025 baseline results. • Beginning in January 2026 all students received four days a week of small group in instruction in reading & math (K-5) and reading or math (6-8) • Assessments were completed last week and growth data will be shared next month Rock 2: By May 2026, the school will increase the net reporter score by 10 points from the Spring 2025 baseline (-14) as measured by the staff insight survey. • Learned that net reporter is not a great measure for staff engagement • Spring Engagement survey completed last week • Achieved a 90% retention rate across all positions • Revamped MS hiring practices to better align to current needs • Fully staffed Rock 3: By May 2026, 90% of all teaching and support staff will demonstrate full internalization and consistent use of our behavior resources by: monitoring behavior data quarterly—targeting a 15% decrease in teacher managed referrals and a 20% increase in documented positive behaviors as recorded in DeansList school-wide. • Behavior system consistently implemented in 95% of classrooms and 100% of returning teacher classrooms • Teachers whose data identified needs provided behavior coaching in addition to academic coaching • Gave a total of 1,255,885 DeansList points which were used at the school store to purchase items, lunches, experiences, and raffle tickets • Reduced the number of referrals from 627 in semester 1 to 327 in semester 2 through consistent implementation of behavior systems		
Finance Committee - 10 Minutes • 26-27 Budget Updates Bill: 83% through the fiscal year of budget to actuals, talked about HANE deficit and it has decreased, grant funding may come in higher, April budget to actuals on track, talked about “the Network Budget” anything that is afforded to the network is done by line item by HASE and HANE - there should be a network budget, significant structural shift, navigating healthy and high performing budget as a board and team moving forward, things are generally on track, bigger strategic question is more shared services model over time. Shared update from state legislature, “hold harmless period” revenue will be shared with schools who have less revenue and	Bill Knous	Inform

schools that have more revenue, HASE and HANE will have a minimum 1% increase, shift towards calculating charters the same way as districts for FY2027. Once the state can calculate enrollment projections, districts will then be able to communicate with their charter schools about what percentage increases they should anticipate next year Chris: HANE will probably see an increase next year, HASE will be more of a question mark, once we get new funding numbers here. Kaylee: when we look at funders and when we look at what we have, we are trying to make sure that we keep the framework that we are a nonprofit and we budget as close to zero as possible, we are in a healthy place right now, there has been a lot of discipline at both schools, and a lot of discipline about spending where it's necessary, and where it needs to be next year, it shows that we are supporting the staff, hoping this helps some of the public comments that we have been seeing, hopefully board has been seeing some of that. Tangibly we are seeing some action items change, she is really proud of the deficit and some funding coming back to us. Excited to see where that goes next year. Katherine: Really important that we are in a good financial position and thanked finance committee members for their help. No further questions.		
REACH Up - 10 Minutes Update re Assessments Talked about interim assessment work and it being valuable because #1 the rigor of interim assessments, they provide rigor and standard of excellence between schools and with campuses, we have used STAR assessment in the past. The last two years we have decided as an organization that STAR didn't align with our standards. HANE started a relationship with ANET, pilot of Propel at HASE. Recommendation is to use ANET for both schools, additional cost for HASE will not cause any adjustments to the program or staffing plan. The Reach up Committee's recommendation is that both schools use the same interim assessment - but start to begin analysis meetings and times that are collaborative across campuses. Whatever needs to happen budget wise is imperative to clear, specific standards aligned excellence. The goal is to make this happen in such a way that doesn't cause adjustments to strategic plan or priorities for the coming years. Sloan: last board meeting, wanted to throw in two cents, we think it's really important that ANET is implemented and why it's useful, wanted to give her strong support. We have had thoughtful discussions about this. Bill: pathway to becoming truly unified one highline entity, this is a no brainer, there are sufficient funds and will save a ton of time and energy, will welcome any opposing arguments but wants to have this happen as soon as possible. Chris: ANET gave them a very good price because we are going in with both schools, expanded returning customer price to HASE, we did have Dr Lewis at the reach up committee meetings, Dr Lewis gave strong support for ANET bc she has been using it at DSST. Kaylee: On the money side, she is pro implementing ANET. I think there is money to be found within the budget and reserves comfortably.	Ramone Carson	Inform

Ramone: a lot of folks have assessments in their day jobs, I want to encourage folks to take questions. Email him with questions the board may have.		
REACH In- 5 Minutes Officer elections Ambar: walked through elections on the board, board treasurer will be voted on in June. Katherine and Ambar are renewing board president and board vice president, asked if anyone is interested in treasurer position, we are working on adding a HANE parent for next year, we have some leads. Ambar move to approve board nominations, motion to vote by ashley, ramone 2nd, board passed unanimously	Ambar Suero	Vote - passed unanimously the board officers for next year
E.D. Update – 15 Minutes - EOY safety and discipline report - Stoplight Thriving Through Transition - Strategic Plan and Portrait of a Grad- final versions Chris: We do an update at the end, updated on in school and out of school suspensions, at HANE two in school suspensions and 0 out of school suspensions. If it is green the discipline was in full compliance within the matrix, restorative practices and make amends was used the most. Total behaviors by month, we have low numbers and not high numbers - it is one way the district holds us accountable to follow discipline matrix and thinking about consequences. As we reported in January, we had two small fire incidents where no students were harmed, one resulted in early closure due to smoke, two student pickup incidents that DPS helped resolve. Had an additional issue after the after school programming and DPS helped resolve, all fire drills, etc all drills were completed. HASE: consistent middle school management, students testing out how adults responded. Just for comparison we can see last year how it went up and down. In a permissibility report from DPS, we had 25 students participating in restorative practices, zero listed as non-permissible, if there were suspensions it was based on a discipline matrix. Dean's List - top graph is first semester, bottom graph is second semester, a lot of the different discipline incidents have reduced from first to second semester. SVL: highest bar is reflections based, midday intervention for students who are having some lower level behavior, dean's list categorize those as an intervention incident, have to communicate to parents if a student is going to a reflection space - that's why it's a high mark. Fighting and physical aggression is student involved and have separate entries for that. Tracks every student that is involved, be cognizant of that. Chris: as we reported in January, we had two operational closures, there have been none this semester except for the snow day, no fires all year, no incidents of child pickup where security had to be called. I wanted to bring back thriving through transition 9 month plan, had an update. Completion of portrait of a graduate, learning rubrics with Dr. Anderson received a grant from DU to expand work with leadership, the board being able to provide input for portraits of a graduate and it being approved. Principal's gave UIP goals, and will be sharing some data in the June meeting. Developing a greenlight for growth tour, draft that has been shared for school leaders, etc., document how we have grown and what we have tried, all ready to go for Dr. Lewis, aligning with board committees for strategic plans and working on identifying goals for new ED back in Feb, we did a good job with operational excellence goals,	Chris Ferris	Inform

Employee experience and student culture, Ramone and Chris collaborated on it and have a good plan for Dr. Lewis through June, Work is still needed for net promoter scale score, survey still needed and will have report in June The board had a goal of hiring new ED, which happened. Two documents, one vision, why do these things have to happen together, briefly wanted to review how a strategic plan and portrait of a graduate happened. BHAG for strategic plan and what was on the portrait of a graduate are pretty similar statements, wanting to preserve access. Went through strategic plan and REACH values, REACH framework in terms of employee. Priorities on slides for portrait of a graduate and REACH Up, students reporting a sense of belonging and connected to reach out portion, being rooted in community, staff trainings, staff creating environment for the students, anti-racist priorities, staff of color and students feeling a sense of community, and relates to portrait's equity commitments. See powerpoint slides. Equity piece really runs across both documents, inclusive environments and people feeling valued, really clear that equity is a core tenant of highline.		
Old Business – 2 Minutes No old business	Chris Ferris	Inform
Reminders/Announcements • Next BOD meeting: June 8 at HASE here via Zoom • End of Year Events • HANE is hosting a bunch of legislators from Washington St and some folks from the Gates foundation, have done a lot to accommodate some groups, Arizona and Chris will be there to facilitate the tour, appreciating Senator Coleman and his work with HA.	Kelly Fleming	Inform
Adjournment Katherine moves to adjourn, 2nd is will anderson, board approves unanimously	Katherine	Adjourn