



## Board of Directors - November 2025 Meeting Minutes

### Team Dashboard - 2025-2026

#### Mission & Vision

##### Mission

- We are a community of diverse families and educators, working together to offer quality Montessori education in a nurturing environment that enriches, empowers, and inspires children to reach their potential and encourages parents to become responsible for and involved with their children's education.

##### Vision:

- Changing the world by nurturing children and their families to be informed, lifelong learners who are a force of change, in education, the community, and society.

#### Board Group Agreements / Guides: Academic Year 2025-2026

- One speaker at a time
- Monitor air time (move up/move back)
- Active listening
- Contribute to the conversation
- Pre-share meeting materials
- Be Present
- Seek to Understand
- Ask clarifying questions
- Practice reeling it in (ie, "Is this the most effective use of our time?")
- Start on time/end on time
- Stick to the agenda
- Consider/check your bias

#### Meeting Logistics

Meeting Day/Time: 11/11/2025 @ 6:00pm

Meeting Location: Lyceum

Team Members Present: Brittany Qualls, Patrick Bader, Rashonda Jones, Suave Kyles, Kia Green, Ben Correia-Harker, Brenda Simmonis, Lakita Wells, Mikaya Clark, Tim Vargo, Ali Kopyt, *Tracy Williams, Jean Dellemann*

Team Members Absent: derria byrd, Kantara Souffrant

#### Meeting Roles

Facilitator: Mikaya Clark

Time Keeper: Tim Vargo

Food: Kia Green

### Most Recent Meeting Action Items / Online Board Activity

- ☐ **HCS Board Member Badges** | Badges have been created to be worn by Board Members when they are in the building. They are stored in the main office.



11/11/2025		
Time	Item	Discussion
5 min	Welcome and Approval of Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suave motions to approve agenda. Brittiny seconds. The agenda is approved</li> </ul>
10 min	ED Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Executive Director Report</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Two staff members have given notice - Ms. Kenia and Mr. Cordario. One position (for facilities) is vacant and the team is currently accepting applications. The other position has been filled.</li> <li>○ <b>Questions posted to Basecamp</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Q: Is the admission's waitlist carried over across multiple academic years or is it a per-year waitlist?</b> A: The waitlist is not carried over from year to year. Parents need to reapply each school year.</li> <li>■ <b>Q: Are the appraisals meant to be individual/team performance evaluations or more of a check-in?</b></li> <li>■ <b>Q: How do you handle issues that might come up in the group setting, but need one-on-one attention?</b></li> <li>■ <b>Q: Regarding the classroom change policy document, is there a similar (internal) document about how the lottery works?</b> A: The lottery we use for admissions is not Highland's but DPI's rule that all public schools admit based on lottery if we have more applicants than seats. We use an online site where we put the student names in, and it produces names in order for the lottery. All other names go on a waitlist from the number they were from the lottery. If a child has a sibling, is a staff child or has Montessori experience they would get preference and move to the top of the waitlist. All of this information is on our website under <a href="#">admissions</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Classroom Change Approach</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Questions posted to Basecamp</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Q: Is this policy new or was it already in effect and posted/accessible for families to know the process?</b> A: This is the third year this policy has been in place. When a parent requests a</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>classroom change, we send them this information that includes instructions as to how to proceed. We do not have an appeal process, but any decision I make, can always go to the board if the parent, staff don't feel like they are being heard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Q: When classroom changes are denied, is there an appeals process?</b> A: For an appeal the board would need to determine how an appeal would affect any future classroom change decisions and how involved they want to be in making those decisions. Jean, and all the teachers put A LOT of time and thought into assigning students to classrooms to make sure they are balanced as much as possible. Otherwise, if we take parent requests into consideration we'd have unbalanced classrooms, both gender, race, age wise as well as student need wise as well. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response: This feels more like an administration's decision and deals with the day to day, so not board business as far as an appeals process. The question was only asked for background and knowledge.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
55 min	Committee Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finance (10 min) - <a href="#">Budget Line Item Descriptions</a></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="#">August Financials</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Highlights from Basecamp</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August wraps up our summer programming and school-year prep, ending the first two months with net positive \$47K.</li> <li>• Total program net income YTD is \$8K. <b>Summer</b> in total (9 weeks Jun-Aug) brought in \$23K, about \$20K less than last year (10 weeks). We saw higher enrollment in K4/5, but lower in K3. We also saw lower enrollment in Elementary in 2025 compared to 2024.</li> <li>• <b>Toddler program:</b> is operating at a loss so far of \$6K. Both programs are operating behind last year's number. Typically, toddlers will catch up once we have full enrollment in fall.</li> <li>• <u>Revenue categories:</u> We saw the investment account bounce back from the loss last month, to a positive \$20K YTD.</li> <li>• <u>Balance Sheet:</u> We have a new 5yr copier lease as we got new copiers. Board designated net assets (building reserve) is reduced by the windows project spent this summer of \$258K.</li> <li>• <u>Expenses to highlight this month:</u> Summer field trips &amp; experiences (\$4K) covered by the DCF childcare grant. More materials purchases (\$11K) and teacher/student technology (\$9K). Floor waxing &amp; summer cleaning (\$29K) and other building projects including parking lot repairs (\$3K) and window</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

modifications to retrofit AC units (\$5K).

- Upcoming expenses to note: Staff HRA reimbursements; Student math software; Adolescent fall camping & fall field trips; Highland Hustle Fundraiser (Oct)

■ **Questions posted to Basecamp**

- **Q: Summer Camp Revenue - there was a difference in the length of the program (9wks vs 10 wks), but how much income does HCS generally generate from a week of summer programming?**

- **Q: Any ideas about reasons for the decreases in enrollment?**

A: We had lower K3 enrollment - 11-12 kids in most weeks. Staff ratios are 1:10, so we had to have two staff for each week, for an additional 1-2 kids. That's not enough revenue to support that level of staffing so we'll need to be more strategic about how we cap summer enrollment to make sure that we are accepting enough children to cover appropriate staffing moving forward.

Our elementary enrollment was also lower in all weeks than last summer. We think some of it was an indicator of overall family satisfaction with the quality of paid programs at that time, as indicated by our Spring Family Survey.

Another factor that we are looking at is the cancellation policy. Right now, families have a lot of flexibility and can cancel 1 week in advance with only a \$10 cancellation fee. We do see a lot of last minute changes, which then result in lower enrollment and high levels of staffing. We're exploring different options to push up the cancellation date and also increase the cancellation fee so that we can better support staffing levels even if enrollment needs change. Because we have our staffing set in April/May, we don't cut staff during the summer months because we know they rely on that income.

- **Q: With the difference of \$20k in summer camp revenue, any plans to get that back up for next summer?**

A: For next year, we're looking at freshening up some of the weeks offered, and doing a bit more promoting within our school community to drive up elementary camp engagement specifically. *(More information*

*will be shared during the December Board meeting)*

- **Q: Curious to see the last maybe 3 yrs to know if last year (or this year) was an anomaly or part of a pattern.**

- **Facilities (20 min)**

- **Joint Facilities & Finance Meeting was recently held during which the teams discussed:**

- Fire Panel Update - There are funds in the budget available to address any issues that may come up with the fire panel. At this point there is no concern, however the plan is to replace it this summer as a part of the larger scope
- Path to AC - discussion involved the possibility of revising the order of projects
  - Looking for quotes on the RTU (roof top unit) system or using mini splits, which is the approach that was used in the Toddler rooms. The committee is exploring the best strategy for implementing AC in the building. Pending further information, we could potentially have AC this summer.
  - As admin is conducting interviews for the new Director of Facilities, the Board underscored the importance of discussing these projects during the interview process.

- Pest Control Issue - The pest control issue isn't new and goes in waves. There are many factors that contribute to the issue including the environment, eating in the classroom, etc. There are policies in place to help address the issue, including additional cleaning in the classroom and treatments from the pest control company once per month.

- Tim has a contact who owns a Wildlife Control company. He will connect with the contact to inquire about the cost to assess the building to seal the gaps/openings where pests can enter.

- *Strategic Plan Updates: Summer Project Updates/Bids*

- **Governance (5 min)**

- Deliberation & Decision Making | Best Practice Checklist

- **INTRODUCE:** Governance will begin employing additional concepts to make meetings more effective to lead to collective, deliberate decision-making by identifying topics on the agenda. The structure: Introduce, brainstorm, research/evaluate, discuss, decide. This structure will be seen throughout the agenda moving forward
- Governance is also requesting committees to incorporate strategic plan updates

using the board calendar during their committee report outs to ensure committee work directly aligns with the strategic plan.

- Board Retreat: Complete Doodle Poll

- **Academics (20 min)**

- The second meeting was held today with a new parent who joined. It was a lively discussion that addressed the vision for the committee as well as supports for Ms. Jean
- [Academic Program Update](#) - Jean Dellemann
  - Curriculum map alignment - the concept was introduced before COVID and the work began after COVID - Upper EL & Lower EL mapping to state standards are in the refinement stage and now the approach is to focus on Children's House to align their instruction with the Science of Reading
  - HCS has connections to a number of Montessori orgs throughout the country and uses tools and resources from those orgs. HCS is now utilizing a math resource in Upper EL and Lower EL is also taking interest
  - [HCS Report Cards](#) | Report cards were released today!
    - Overall score of 81, which exceeds expectation category; our growth and achievement are well balanced
      - There were adjustments made to what constitute proficient, which has slightly impacted the achievement score across the board
    - Doubled the math achievement rate! There has been a substantial gap in the math and ELA achievement. We are moving in the right direction
    - Target Group Outcomes and On track to graduation have increased.
      - AP doing great work with 8th grade proficiency
    - Priority Area Score (schools score compared to other schools in the state) has increased 13.4%
    - Area of Concern: Students of Color and White students are all growing but not at the same pace. Doing many of the things that are best practice for reducing achievement gaps; there are opportunities for more in-depth work, including looking at student voice.
      - Black Student scoring Advanced on Math is concerning low.
    - Growth - the growth scores compare specific demographics of students to other students across the state. The report card shows HCS students are growing significantly more than average in reading and just about

average in math

- The ELA rate stayed similar year over year in terms of value add.
- In the area of Math, we need to achieve higher than average growth to overcome the significant achievement gaps, meaning we need scores that are above 3 (which is average).
  - Our black students are at 2.9, which is significantly lower than white students. While moving in the right direction, more work is needed. Looking at gathering more information/approaches that other schools utilize where Black students are performing at a higher rate
    - Is there a correlation between behavioral interventions for particular students and how that reflects on their test scores? The team is digging deeper to look at Nautilus calls (in particular time out of the classroom).
    - Thoughts on increasing physical activity to impact learning? There are opportunities with built in movement breaks; Occupational Therapists have also incorporated movement breaks in the hallway. This correlation is something to further think about.
    - Addressing equity gaps in the curriculum - is there a difference in how and the amount of time black students and white students are engaging with curricula? Observation tools are designed to focus on the use of Montessori tools; there may be an opportunity to incorporate different elements to the observation process.
    - What is being done to address the psychological implications of Black children who internalize messages regarding their academics and environment? There is more work to be done in this area. The Data team is reading Courageous Conversations about race to bring more strategies and approaches toward addressing achievement

		<p>gaps. It merges passion and persistence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On track to graduation - this rate indicates how successful students are progressing toward completing K-12 education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The report card shows that the 3rd grade proficiency rate is lower than the state average, however the 3rd-8th grade proficiency rate is higher than average. This indicates that more work is needed with earlier intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has begun starting interventions much earlier in Children's House</li> <li>How are we using the library? Lower and Upper EI utilize the library.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>More data available to be shared during the December board meeting</li> </ul>	
5 min	<b>DISCUSSION</b> Board Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expectation to pledge financial commitment to Highland. Board is still not at 100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The monetary commitment does not have to be substantial. The expectation is that the board commits at least \$1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a donation <a href="#">online</a> or via check (which you are welcome to leave for Ms. Annie in the front office).</li> <li>Submit your <a href="#">pledge commitment form</a>, noting your intention to make a donation before June 30, 2026. (This can be dropped off to Annie or emailed).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
10 min	Round Robin Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brittany asked about pick up on 17th street now that the street has been updated with a bike lane. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Admin is working on solutions, inclusive of asking the city for a stop sign on 18th Street</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
5 min	Adjourn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brenda motions to adjourn. Ben seconds. The meeting is adjourned.</li> </ul>	
<b>November 2025 Board Engagement / Representation</b>		11/1 - MMUN Harvest Dance: Kia, Brittany 11/6 - Follow the Child: Lakita, Kia, Rashonda, derria, Patrick 11/13 & 11/14 - Lower EI Circus: Mikaya, Suave, derria, Patrick	<b>11/15 - Playground/Gardens Work Day: NO REPRESENTATION</b> 11/25 - Community Feast: Lakita, Brittiny, Brenda, Suave, Mikaya, Ali, Kia