

Harlem Hebrew Board Meeting Agenda

December 15, 2021, 6:30 pm

Location: Zoom

1. Call to Order & Reminder for Public Comment(s) Sign Up
2. Adoption of December 2021 Agenda
3. Approval of November 2021 Minutes
4. School Leadership Update
5. PTO Update
6. Network Update
7. Public Comments
8. Adjournment

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2021, 6:30 pm

Location: Zoom

Trustees Present

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman
Sara Bloom
Linda Aristondo
William Allen
Tanya Jones

Also Present

Emily Carson, Head of School, Harlem Hebrew
 MarrLa Merritt, Director of Operations, Harlem Hebrew
 Jon Rosenberg, Chief Executive Officer, Hebrew Public
 Valerie Khaytina, Chief External Officer, Hebrew Public
 Emily Fernandez, Chief Schools Officer, Hebrew Public
 Lauren Murphy, External Relations Manager, Hebrew Public
 Yelena Raffoul, PTO President, Harlem Hebrew
 2 Members of the Public

I. Call to Order & Reminder for Public Comments

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman opened the meeting at 6:32 pm and reminded everyone in attendance in order to sign up to make a public comment prior to our board meeting, email boardharlem@hebrewpublic.org. Members of the public who missed the public notices can sign up now by using the chat function. Members of the board and staff do not typically respond to public comments at the time they are made. However, unanswered questions will be responded to within a few business days.

2. Adoption of November 2021 Agenda

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to adopt, William Allen made a motion to adopt the November 2021 agenda. Sara Bloom seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of the October 2021 Minutes

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to approve, William Allen made a motion to approve the October 2021 minutes. Tanya Jones seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Harlem Hebrew Safety Plan 2021-22

The updated 2021-22 Harlem Hebrew Safety Plan was shared with the board last week and will be posted on the school website for community members. The document has been updated modestly from prior years and under the charter, it is required to be approved yearly by the board of trustees. Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to approve Harlem Hebrew's 2021-22 Safety Plan, Sara Bloom made the motion to approve, William Allen seconded, and the motion went to a vote where it was passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions.

5. Approval of Charter Revisions

Harlem Hebrew is currently pursuing revisions to the school charter as part of the renewal process with the authorizer, the NYS Education Department (NYSED). The following revisions are being proposed:

- a. Enrollment: Harlem Hebrew has updated the enrollment policy to include a school employee preference. The revision is really important because it will help to attract and retain staff.

The lottery preferences are as follows:

1. 1st preference to returning students and their siblings
2. 2nd preference to employee's students (both within the charter school and the CMO)
3. 3rd preference to students within the district
4. 4th preference to students outside the district

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to approve adding a lottery preference for school employees. Sara Bloom made the motion to approve, William Allen seconded, and the



motion went to a vote where it was passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions. As such, the board adopted the following resolution:

The resolutions hereinafter set forth as the action of the Board of Trustees of HARLEM HEBREW LANGUAGE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL (the "School") have been duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the School (the "Board") duly called and held for such purpose, and do hereby direct that these Resolutions be filed in the minute book of the School:

WHEREAS, the School was granted a charter (the "Charter") by the New York State Board of Regents (the "Regents") at a regularly scheduled meeting on June 19, 2012, to operate pursuant to its charter application (the "Application") which was incorporated by reference into the Charter Agreement (the "Charter Agreement") signed by and between the State Education Department of New York ("Authorizer") and the School, which Charter was subsequently renewed by the Regents at its January 2018 meeting for an additional term of four (4) years through and including June 30, 2022; and

WHEREAS, at its meeting on November 9, 2016, the Board duly voted to amend the School's lottery preference categories beginning with admissions for the 2017-18 school year, to the following in order of preference 1: siblings of enrolled students; 2: children of staff; 3: residents of community school district three 4: out of district residents, subject to approval from its Authorizer; and

WHEREAS, on November 16, 2016, in consultation with the Authorizer, the Board Chair submitted the School's request for the aforementioned change(s) to its lottery preferences as a non-material revision to its charter (the "Enrollment Preference Revision") to the Authorizer for approval; and

WHEREAS, on November 16, 2016, the Executive Director of the Authorizer, responded by email that a formal approval letter for the Charter Revision Request would be "provided shortly" and on November 17, 2016, the Authorizer's liaison to the School responded by email that she would be would sending the formal approval for the Charter Revision Request by "the end of the week" (together, the "Email Approvals"); and

WHEREAS, no formal approval was ever sent by the Authorizer but the School in good faith relied on the Email Approvals to implement the Enrollment Preference Revision; and

WHEREAS, the Authorizer has recently requested in connection with the School's 2nd renewal application that the Enrollment Preference Revisions is resubmitted with supporting



documentation so that the Authorizer can officially approve the Enrollment Preference Revisions along with a renewal of the School's Charter.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby ratifies the original Enrollment Preference Revisions and directs that the School make a new charter revision request (the "Request") to the Authorizer to amend the Charter Agreement to reflect the Enrollment Preference Revisions effective as of the soonest possible date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any Trustee or officer of the School or Board designee from Hebrew Public, Charter Management Office (the "CMO") of the School (each, a "Proper Representative"), be and hereby is authorized and directed, jointly and severally, to execute and deliver the Request and any other documents consistent with the transactions described above and such further agreements, assignments, pledges, instruments, consents, and documents ancillary to the Request or necessary in the determination of any Proper Representative, in the name of and on behalf of the School, in order to fully carry out the intent and accomplish the purposes of the foregoing resolutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, all actions heretofore taken by any Proper Representative, for and on behalf of the School in connection with the Request shall be and hereby are ratified and approved, and that the authority given hereunder shall be retroactive and any and all acts hereunder performed prior to the passage of these resolutions are hereby ratified and approved.

Another change proposed was:

School Calendar: The calendar is being modestly updated, NYSED is requiring Harlem Hebrew to move from 183 school days to 185 days for 21-22 and increase to 190 days next year. More details will be shared with families and staff at a later date.

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman made the motion to approve the school calendar update, Sara Bloom seconded, and the motion went to a vote where it was passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions.

6. Approval of Harlem Hebrew Bylaw Amendment Resolutions

The Harlem Hebrew Board of Trustees discussed the following changes to the bylaws:

- a. In an effort to clarify the role and function of Board committees, the following change is being proposed: Modifying the committee structure by eliminating the Executive Committee, reducing the number of committees to three: Governance, Finance, and Audit, & Education and Accountability. The Governance Committee will be chaired by



the Board President and will combine the current Executive and Governance committees.

- b. In an effort to retain strong Board engagement and align all of Hebrew Public's NYC school boards, the following changes are being proposed: Removing the current term limits for Harlem Hebrew trustees and reducing the maximum number of trustees from 15 to 11.

After a brief discussion amongst the board members, Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to approve the aforementioned changes to the Harlem Hebrew bylaws. Tanya Jones made the motion to approve, William Allen seconded, and the motion went to a vote where it was passed unanimously with no objections or abstentions. As such, the board adopted the following resolutions:

The resolutions hereinafter set forth as the action of the Board of Trustees of HARLEM HEBREW LANGUAGE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL (the "School") have been duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the School (the "Board") duly called and held for such purpose, and do hereby direct that these Resolutions be filed in the minute book of the School:

WHEREAS, the School was granted a charter by the New York State Board of Regents (the "Board of Regents") at a regularly scheduled meeting on June 19, 2012, to operate pursuant to its Charter Application (the "Application") which was incorporated by reference into the Charter Agreement (the "Charter Agreement") signed by and between the State Education Department of New York ("Authorizer") and the School, with the charter subsequently renewed by the Board of Regents for an additional consecutive term on January 22-23, 2018, expanding the charter through June 30, 2022;

WHEREAS, the School's Bylaws ("Bylaws") state that the Board shall not have less than five (5) members and no more than fifteen (15) members; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to have its membership minimum/maximum number of trustees align with those of its sister Hebrew Public charter schools.

WHEREAS, the Bylaws require Board Members to step down for at least one year after serving three consecutive three year terms; and

WHEREAS, the Board desires to allow its members to serve consecutive terms without term limitation in order to more efficiently govern the School.



WHEREAS, the Charter Agreement and Bylaws state the Board shall have four (4) standing committees; (1) Executive; (2) Governance; (3) Finance and Audit and (4) Education and Accountability; and

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to decrease the number of its committees from four (4) standing committees to three (3), and to allocate the tasks of the Executive Committee to the Governance Committee in order to align its committee structure with those of its sister Hebrew Public schools.

WHEREAS, the School originally based its school calendar on an instructional model of 190 days and has since changed to 185 days of instruction; and

WHEREAS, the current school year of 2021-2022 was originally set to have 183 days of instruction; and

WHEREAS, the Authorizer is requiring that the School have 185 days of instruction for the 2021-2022 school year and revert to 190 days of instruction beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board directs that the Bylaws be amended to set the minimum number of Board Members at five (5) and the maximum at eleven (11) in order to align with its sister Hebrew Public schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs that the Bylaws be amended to allow for Board Members to serve consecutive board terms without limitation or interruption; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board directs that the Charter Agreement and Bylaws be amended to change the number of standing board committees from four (4) to three (3), with the revised committees being: (1) Governance; (2) Finance and Audit, and; (3) Education and Accountability, and with the Governance Committee assuming all the requirements, tasks and structure of the Executive Committee, subject to approval from the Authorizer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Board directs that School Leadership add an additional two (2) days of instruction to the school calendar for the current school year to bring the total days of instruction to 185; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes School Leadership to construct a school calendar with 190 days of instruction beginning with the 2022-2023 school year and

directs that the Charter Agreement be amended to reflect 190 instructional days, accordingly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School is authorized to make these requests (the “Revision Requests”) to the Authorizer to amend the Charter Agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that that any Trustee or officer of the School or Board designee from Hebrew Public (“Hebrew Public”), Charter Management Organization of the School, (each, a “Proper Representative”), be and hereby is authorized and directed, jointly and severally, to execute and deliver the Revision Requests and any other documents consistent with the transactions described above and such further agreements, assignments, pledges, instruments, consents and documents ancillary to the Revision Request or necessary in the determination of any Proper Representative, in the name of and on behalf of the School, in order to fully carry out the intent and accomplish the purposes of the foregoing resolutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, all actions heretofore taken by any Proper Representative, for and on behalf of the School in connection with the Revision Requests shall be and hereby are ratified and approved, and that the authority given hereunder shall be retroactive and any and all acts hereunder performed prior to the passage of these resolutions are hereby ratified and approved.

7. School Leadership Update

Emily Carson, Harlem Hebrew’s Head of School updated the board on the following:

- Current Vacancies
 - Emily Carson shared vacancies that currently exist at the school
 - Dean of Culture
 - 5th grade Math Teacher
 - 3 Middle School ICT Teachers
 - Specials Teacher
 - Members of the leadership team have stepped into classrooms to teach to help support the vacancies
 - In an effort to ensure all new staff members feel fully supported and mentored, Harlem Hebrew will introduce them to the community after the on-boarding process is completed
- General Updates
 - Election Day!
 - Voting and civics engagement across all grades in the school including kindergarten (who voted on favorite cookie)

- Middle school spoke about the mayoral candidates and did a mock voting activity
 - Currently, 2 classrooms are quarantined
 - All students have to quarantine for ten days
 - First Interim assessment (practice state exam) took place
 - Much shorter than the state exam
 - Easing students into testing
 - Adjusting school systems and schedules to make them more efficient and effective
 - Dismissal and bus support
 - Lunch schedules and locations
 - Middle schoolers now have more time outside and to socialize
 - Student of the Month!
 - Launched this month
 - Book Charter Day
 - Students and staff had an option to dress up as their favorite book character
 - Draw Me a City competition
 - A network-wide competition that focuses on Hebrew and Israel studies
 - Students drew the city their homeroom classroom is named after
 - High School meetings with families to discuss the application process
- Upcoming
 - Thanksgiving Break
 - Students dismissed at noon on Wednesday
 - Virtual Family Conferences are next week
 - 117 families signed up for parent conferences
 - The goal is to have 100% of families signed up
 - Families must meet with their child's homeroom teacher but can also select other teachers to meet with Interventionists, Hebrew, Deans, Specials, Emily Carson...etc.
 - Launching of office hours with Emily
 - Opportunities for families to sign up weekly
 - Spirit Friday with competition for extra recess time
 - Class with the highest % of engagement will get extra time at recess
 - Spirit Week for joy during Thanksgiving week
- Staff Focuses
 - Supporting strong classroom culture, particularly with upper grades given teacher vacancies
 - Feedback on student work

- Continuing partnership with families

8. PTO Update

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman introduced the board to the new PTO President, Yelena Raffoul who then updated the board on the following:

- Teacher Appreciation Bagel Breakfast
 - COVID Safe, individually packaged
- Welcome Picnic/Halloween Scavenger Hunt
 - Over 50 families showed up and participated
- Attitude of Gratitude Month, November
 - Sharing Kindness

9. Network Update

Jon Rosenberg, CEO, Hebrew Public shared the following:

- Public Education Sector Trends
 - Staff Turnover and Vacancies
 - Many sectors other than education have been affected
 - 3 Broad Categories for vacancies
 - Vaccine mandate
 - In place at the end of summer requiring staff to get vaccinated by early fall
 - Natural turnover
 - Smaller % of applications received
 - Staff Burnout
 - Higher number of resignations during the school year than ever before
 - Tapping all resources and incentives to support and encourage staff members to continue
 - Creating a positive, warm, encouraging, and supportive environment for staff
 - Strain on remaining staff when staff members leave because they are stretched thin, multiple network staff members are pushing in to support in school when needed
 - Emily Fernandez, Chief Schools Officer spoke about the charter sector and the steps Hebrew Public's Talent Director, Jennice Hyde is taking to actively seek out staff members
- COVID-19/Quarantine Policy
 - Direct exposure with staff members or students COVID-19 positive means all kids in the class must remain quarantined for ten days

- Leadership acknowledges how it is hard on parents and families with childcare
 - If parents/guardians are struggling to find childcare, please reach out to the school directly
- Currently, Harlem Hebrew cannot soften the COVID-19 policies
 - Although there is no sign of spread in the building, the school has had an extremely high number of COVID-19 positive cases in the school community
 - This is not related to school protocol
 - HVAC system is in place
 - Strong policies
 - Parents and family members have been very helpful with enforcing what students need to do in the building
 - Positive cases must decrease before the school can move toward partial quarantine
- In-Person Visits
 - Although Hebrew Public schools would like to welcome visitors in the building, it is not safe yet, hopefully in the near future
- COVID-19 Vaccination
 - The Federal Government approved vaccines for children ages 5+
 - Hebrew Public strongly encourages families to speak with their doctors and see if it is the right thing for their family to do
 - Hebrew Public will be looking into the following:
 - Mobile vaccination units that may be able to provide vaccinations on-site
 - Working with the NYC Dept of Health to set up a Town Hall where public health medical experts speak about the child vaccine and answer family questions
 - Hebrew Public will not require vaccination for anyone other than staff members unless the city and state government mandate it under law

10. Public Comments

There was a comment from one member of the public in regards to middle school teachers.

11. Adjournment

Vanessa Goldberg-Drossman asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tanya Jones motioned to adjourn the meeting, Sara Bloom seconded, the motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 7:11 pm. The board will meet next on December 15 at 6:30 pm.