



HCCS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Regular Meeting – Wednesday, May 15, 2024 – 5:30 PM – Room #144

Public Zoom Link: <https://zoom.us/j/96422657430>

- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call - 5:32pm - Sherry, Laura, Dillon, Mouna (5:37), Vincent, Daniel, Absent (Jordan)**
- II. **Admin: Kevin, Lindsey; Thaddeus as Staff Representative**
- III. **Changes or Additions to the Agenda - None**
- IV. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes - Approved**
- V. **Public Comment -**
 - a. **Thaddeus Wilson** - See statement
 - b. **TJ Wilson** - See statement
 - c. **Mehdi Hannouchi**- See statement
 - d. **Audre Doss** - See statement
 - e. **Michean Wilson** - See statement
 - f. **Jungsoo Ahn** - See statement
 - g. **Said Hannouchi** - Parent of a 4th grade student sharing a deep concern for what happened to the kids in our school who have been targeted by their race. The problem is more than disciplinary action; the culture and environment don't seem to be sending the appropriate message. We invest more in activities and social events than educating our upcoming adults. The values of compassion, community, etc. We easily criticize politicians - but shy away when it comes into our community. Invest in principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. For admins, teachers, board, and parents who are the first line of education for our students.
 - h. **Matthias Kerch** - Parent at HC and former board member. Disappointment from the administration - no mention of the word racism in the recent letter. Words like racial intolerance mask the reality of the damage being done. Asks that the real terminology is used.
 - i. **Adi Raz** - Like to share that her children have had anti-semitic statements made to them. We need to educate the parents, the school, the kids, about how these comments are hurtful and inappropriate.
- VI. **Board Correspondence - None**
- VII. **Presentations: None**
- VIII. **Organizational Items - Motion to approve in a group rather than individually. - All present in favor (omit Jordan)**
 - a. Deposit Accounts & Signatories
 - b. Contract Negotiations
 - c. Chief Financial Officer
 - d. Civil Rights Coordinator
 - e. Freedom of Information Act Coordinator
 - f. Legal Counsel - Clark Hill, PLC
 - g. External Auditor - Yao & Yao
 - h. Board Meeting Calendar, Time & Method of Notification - 3rd Wednesday of every month at 5:30 with meeting information posted according to the open meetings act.
- IX. **Reports**
 - a. **President's Report - Sherry**
 - i. Thank you for joining us - we appreciate the participation in these meetings and especially appreciate the sensitive and personal public comment tonight especially as we head into our annual and strategic planning. HCCS is nothing without the community. We are in a challenging time; we are actively listening to comments and tonight is no exception. Our goal is to increase

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

our focus on equity in all board activities. We look forward to working closely with admin and with the newly formed Equity Board Advisory. During this time we will have difficult and messy interactions and that's okay. We'll continue these discussions. Board policy is a critical foundation piece. Giving input and time are key components to making our community events successful. Thank you to all the admin and staff who put the work into making that happen. Thank to everyone who gave their time to the Director Evaluation; this is a way to share our specific objectives and have input. We need to foster collaboration and not divisiveness. Operationally, we're happy to have the Deputy Superintendent of the WISD here today. The values of our school are prominent in our charter contract.

- ii. Board Retreat on Saturday June XX. There will also be special meetings.
- b. Director's Report
 - i. Echoing what Sherry said. This has been a difficult time and an opportunity for growth and those of us close to this situation have been seeing that growth. Thank you to the Equity Advisory Board and newly formed Staff Equity Board.
 - ii. Congratulations and Good Luck to our 5th graders on their way to Camp Tamarack.
 - iii. Thank you to everyone for making the curriculum celebration a success.
- c. Parent-Teacher Organization Report
 - i. Will no longer be a standing report. Will report twice annually.
- d. Committee Reports as Applicable
 - i. Finance - Laura
 - 1. Finance has been working hard on the 24/25 budget. Worked hard on making the numbers work. Thank you to Kevin for helping make positive improvements on compensation.
 - ii. Personnel - Kevin
 - 1. 2 - Vacancies on certified staff - we have an abundance of qualified candidates. (Middle school math, social work).
 - iii. Governance - Sherry
 - 1. Continued work on the Director Evaluation. Tonight we have a slightly modified agenda to accommodate a closed session to work toward completing the director evaluation.
 - 2. Policy Updates considered - our policy review was delayed in order to make time for the Charter Reauthorization.
 - iv. Strategic Planning - Sherry
 - 1. Slowed down the process while working on the Charter but still in process. We will provide additional opportunities to give input.
 - v. Equity - Grace
 - 1. See Letter

X. Discussion Items

- a. Preliminary Budget & Compensation - Laura
 - i. Everyone will move up a step on the pay scale
 - ii. Moving each step forward 2%
 - iii. Bonus based on fiscal health of the school; contingent on the fund balance of the 24/25 being greater than 12%. Prior fund balance was at approximately 18%.
 - iv. Sherry: Discussion in finance for strategic planning - multi-year projections for board consideration (3 years).
 - v. Kevin: In the process of dis-integrating camp funds in order to have two clear buckets of funds. Last piece is for the MI government to sign legislation with an estimate at 9,849 per pupil. Expected increase in students back to pre-23/24 levels.
 - 1. Investment in compensation to support recruitment and retention, staff PD, support for experiential learning experiences (including field trips, guest speakers, arts, etc.)
 - 2. Fund balance not below 12%
 - 3. Reduction in IAs through attrition from 9.1 to 7.6 FTE.
 - 4. Vincent: Can we fill the need with parents in the classroom? Kevin: Not comfortable talking about that right now.

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

5. Kevin: Reduction/Right Size office staff. Establish strategic fund development/fund raising through HCCF to mitigate future state revenue decreases. Honoring future compensation policy obligations.
 6. Daniel: Are these your priorities or those of the finance committee? Laura/Kevin: shared with the finance committee.
 7. Vincent: Identifying areas where contracts can be evaluated? Kevin: Yes, these can have significant impacts. A year run-way would be a comfortable timeline to look at changing contracts such as accounting, etc.
 8. Sherry: We're looking for an incoming Foundation President.
- vi. First reading of the edits to the compensation policy (increase in steps, 2% increase for all pay scales, potential bonus). Second reading and action item at the June Meeting.

XI. Action Items

- a. HCCS Bylaws & Articles of Incorporation - Moved by Dillon, Seconded Daniel - All present in favor (omitting Jordan).
 - i. 2024 Authorizing Body Resolution, Method of selection
 - ii. 2024 Terms & Conditions
 - iii. 2024 Restated Articles of Incorporation
 - iv. 2024 Schedule 3 - bylaws
 - v. 2024 Schedules 4, 5, 6
 - vi. Changes from April Meeting: Increasing Max term length of UP TO 4 years (with noted term lengths decided before year's election as determined by the Governance Committee. If a 4 year term was activated it would be the candidate(s) with the most votes in that given election would serve the 4 year term), clarifying disqualifications from office, defining the voting membership for board elections
 - vii. Made changes to how best organize these documents with recommendation from legal council, as well Sherry & Naomi at the WISD.
 - viii. Process for renewal:
 1. Formal Adoption of final bylaws and restated articles of incorporation by HCCS board of trustees scheduled for 5/5/24
 2. Contract approved by WISD board of education scheduled for 5/28/24
 3. Bylaws signed by secretary of HCCS Board
 4. Charter contract signed by president of HCCS Board
 5. Charter contract and support resolutions signed by the president of WISD Board
 6. Copies of executed contract archives in HCCS and WISD office. PDF copies saved on shared drive of HCCS Board of Trustees.
- b. Pandemic Response Policy - No changes and no action needed unless changes are requested.

XII. Acknowledgements & Thank You's

- a. **Sherry:** Thank you to everyone in person and online - and thank you to those who aren't here tonight but have provided feedback in other avenues.
- b. **Vincent:** Thank you to the community members who came out today and spoke about incredibly difficult things.
- c. **Daniel:** Thank you to those who came today and put a mirror up to our community. Thank you to the children who came today and shared your heartbreaking stories. And to the equity committee for the well written letter that will serve our community.
- d. **Mouna:** Echo my colleagues.
- e. **Sherry:** Specific end of year thank yous to all those involved in band concerts, camps, PE Play day, curriculum night. Thank you to everyone as we invest in closing this year with intention.

XIII. Public Comment

- a. **Sue Hoffbauer** - Question about process? Does this count as the first reading of the budget with a second reading and approval needed in the June? Sherry: Operational response - yes we did a first

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

reading of the compensation changes, but the reminder of the budget will need a special meeting in June.

- b. **Mariolga Briceno:** Recognize the effort that Kevin & Lindsey have done in the last few weeks, they've done a wonderful job of calling the different people and I think we should trust their expertise in this.
- c. **Fernanda Cross:** Speaking as a parent, Thank you so much to the students who came here and spoke and sent in their recordings. Six years ago my oldest child was a victim of racism by a teacher. The administration barely got involved so we had to work it out with the teacher alone. Because of this experience we created the equity committee. I wish I had had this administration's response back at that time. Efforts from teachers, the board, and the administration are valued - bringing up a question for us to consider - we need our families to get involved in this. When we make efforts but 10 people show up - out of hundreds - how do parents show up and take this more seriously? I don't know what the solution is but it's something that families of color are doing every day. This is an invitation for work together so that the onus is not just on the families of color.
- d. **N'Namdi Washington:** parent of a 7th and 4th grader - I want to thank the equity advisory committee - a lot of what you put in this letter resonates - inclusivity, non-exclusion, community - these are reasons we brought our kids here. With the integration with High Point - we thought this would be a safe environment for our children - the experience with one daughter has been inclusive, but with another it has been exclusive. It's been concerning to have two slightly different experiences. Sometimes racism isn't direct but in-direct but that still has psychological effects. I appreciate it being about community and the work the admin have done and the parents need to do this work - whether you're combating white privilege or feeling the effects of non-inclusion. There's a lot of word of mouth that goes throughout the community and you want positive connotations to be attached to your school. The negative feedback becomes amplified within groups of parents.
- e. **Abby Adams:** First say a huge heartfelt thank you to the students who spoke and gave presentations at the meeting tonight. They've been powerful and you've been heard. I want to thank the board for having a welcome table at the curriculum celebration - a total success - the welcome table was a great addition and helped orient people to the event. Huge thank you to the teachers who showcased the students' work. Having in person community events is so important to putting the community in HCCS, including academic and casual - getting together in person helps us get to know each other and the other parents - this can go a long way to increasing empathy and decreasing harm. I'd like to lean back into that as we move away from the disruption of the pandemic.

XIV. Closed Session - Motion to enter closed session to discuss the director evaluation - Daniel, Mouna seconded - all in favor.

- a. Executive Director's 2023-24 Evaluation
- b. Reconvene in Open Session

XV. Action Items

- a. Executive Director's 2023-24 Evaluation - Mouna, Daniel seconded the motion to table the evaluation until we can receive the student growth data. All present in favor (omit Jordan, Laura).

XVI. Adjournment - 10:17PM

Thaddeus Wilson Public Comment Statement

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board,

The past three weeks have been extraordinarily challenging for our community. We have faced turmoil and pain that require us to look deep within ourselves to confront and address the biases and toxicity of privilege that persist among us. As a community, we must be vigilant in recognizing these issues and actively work to create a more inclusive and equitable environment.

Regrettably, we have families of minority students who have experienced significant violations of the social justice principles that we, as a school, have pledged to uphold. These violations are not just infractions against our policies; they are breaches of the trust and safety that every family in our community deserves. Additionally, it has come to our attention that some parents have overstepped their bounds, attempting to influence our school's operations in negative ways. This interference has not only disrupted our administrative processes but has also hindered our efforts to provide justice and support to those who need it most. The agreements we made as a community have been violated, and this has severely impeded our progress towards creating a just and fair environment for all.

Our administrators have been working tirelessly to rectify the wrongs committed against minority families in our school. Their dedication to righting these injustices has been unwavering, yet their efforts have been continually thwarted by the meddling of certain parents. This undue interference has, at times, made their already challenging jobs nearly impossible. Today, you will hear directly from the victims of the reprehensible acts that have taken place within our community. These individuals will share their experiences, highlighting how our collective failure to uphold justice has impacted them. It is imperative that we listen to their stories with open hearts and minds, understanding the profound consequences of our actions and inactions.

As you look around, you will see friends and supporters holding signs that read, "Honey Creek: Where _____ people are our people." This blank space is a poignant reminder of the values we must strive to embody. How will we choose to fill in that blank? Will it be with the word "Rich" or "White"? Or will we rise to the challenge and ensure that the word we use is "ALL"? The actions we take as a community moving forward will define our commitment to inclusivity and justice. Let us ensure that "Honey Creek" is a place where all people are genuinely valued and respected. The future of our school and the well-being of our community depend on our collective resolve to embrace this vision.

Thank you.

TJ Wilson Public Comment Statement

In the modern world, where variety should be celebrated and differences embraced, the persistence of racial and religious discrimination remains a distressing reality. As a member of a minority group, particularly someone who identifies with Islam, I have encountered firsthand the sting of derogatory slurs and the weight of Islamophobic beliefs. In this speech, I will delve into the personal experience of being called a monkey and the more general issue of discrimination against Islam, exploring its essence, presentations, and the pressing for joint action to combat it.

The use of racial slurs like "monkey" is not only an insult; it is a form of dehumanization (meaning the process of depriving a person or group of positive human qualities). Historically, such speech has been used to stain and demean marginalized communities, depriving them of their humanity and reducing them to jokes. Being called a monkey is a painful reminder of the stable legacy of racism, where individuals are judged not by their essence but by the coloring of their skin, their racial background, or their religious background.

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

This brings the topic of Islamophobia, the illogical fear or hostility of Islam and Muslims is a pervasive issue that saturates various aspects of civilization. Fuelled by misinformation, stereotypes, and political timetables, Islamophobia breeds hatred toward Muslims, leading to discrimination, harassment, and even brutality. Its essence can be traced to historical battles, geopolitical heat, and the shocking portrayal of Islam in media, memorializing harmful stereotypes and promoting an environment of fear and doubt.

As a Muslim, guiding spaces where Islamophobia is dense can be difficult. From casual microaggressions to overt acts of discrimination, the experience of being marginalized takes a toll on one's feel of belonging and well-being. Whether it's facing scrutiny at School, enduring hateful comments from trusted ones, or encountering discrimination in social settings, the specter of Islamophobia dominates large, casting a shadow over everyday interactions and experiences.

Despite the majority of discrimination, there is hope in the power of education, talk, and allyship. By challenging stereotypes, fostering interfaith dialogue, and promoting cultural exchange, we can tear the walls of unawareness and fear that divide us. Building bridges of understanding requires empathy, humbleness, and a willingness to confront our own biases. It is through meaningful engagement and solidarity that we can create a more inclusive and fair society for all.

Mehdi Hannouchi Public Comment Statement

The board secretary has reached out for a copy of the written statement, once received the minutes will be updated to include it.

Audre Doss Public Comment

My name is Audre Doss. I am a third-grade student at Honey Creek. When I was in K-1, racist things happened to me at this school, and nothing was done about it until my mom yelled at the school. People are still touching my hair now and it's like it's not a big deal. I'm not surprised to hear about racist things happening to my friends because I know that's been happening at this school. I don't want to go to this school if this keeps on happening. It needs to STOP.

Michean Wilson Public Comment Statement

For the last two years at Honeycreek, I have been experiencing a lot of racism. I won't name any names; I will just describe my experiences. The first incident involved a student telling me to kill myself and calling me the N-word. Another student threw a banana at me and told me to eat it because I am a monkey. Several kids have called me a monkey. Almost once or twice a week, my backpack and Chromebook are tampered with. In fact, one kid hid my Chromebook every single Monday, so I had to search for it throughout the school. This disrupted my class time because I had to look for my Chromebook during class, which we use regularly.

A student told me to go back to the field where I belong. That same student also said Black people are very productive, so I belong in the fields. He added that he didn't know if white people are the best race, but he knew for a fact that Black people are the worst race. A kid told me my kind isn't welcome here. When I was talking about going to a birthday party, someone said they couldn't invite me because if I jumped into the pool, I would die because I'm Black. A kid told me they couldn't be my friend because they can't see me in the dark.

A while ago, I got braids that were extensions, and a kid said my hair looked too much. Then the kid whispered, "It's just too Black." I have also seen other kids being bullied not just for their race but for their size. I have a friend who showed a kid an image of themselves, and the kid said to my friend, "Did you just eat Taco Bell before that because you look really fat." All these things that have happened have almost become normalized for many of these students, including me.

Jungsoo Ahn Public Comment Statement

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

My name is Jungsoo Ahn. I am a trained teacher, school administrator, and educational researcher. My research focuses on how children learn racism within schools and how these experiences impact their lives into adulthood. For the purposes of this meeting, I possess all the experience as a practitioner and researcher to comment as an expert. There are several reasons for why children of the global majority are being harmed at Honey Creek that are common among schools. There is one that is unique to Honey Creek.

1) Teachers have mishandled racial assault, thinking that these were issues that could be addressed within the classroom. This is not okay, but it is common, given that most teachers are prepared in systems that do not prioritize how one teaches across difference. Yet, to my knowledge, teachers at this school have taken responsibility for their actions and there are efforts underway to repair the harm.

2) The systems to address racial assault were opaque. Not having these systems is unacceptable but common. To my knowledge, once these systems were established and racial assault was being reported, the administrators acted swiftly.

3) The next reason is unique to Honey Creek. When administrators recommended disciplinary action to be taken against those students who caused racial trauma, parents of the children who were causing harm interfered and recommended alternative action for their kids so they would face lesser consequences. Several parents of the perpetrators assume leadership positions on the Board of Governance and the PTO. These events will have lasting effects on the children who have been involved and those who have witnessed these events unfold—in other words, all children at Honey Creek. The problem, here, is not primarily the children. They are in school to learn. They will make mistakes.

I understand that there are measures finally being taken to address racial assault. But this is hardly a solution. The problem at this point is that these lessons have now been learned and parents are blocking the consequences their children need to face. Children have learned who deserves to be protected and celebrated and who doesn't. The children who have caused harm are learning that their parents will protect them when they are being racist. The research says that while curriculum and the diversity of a school are important, children learn about racism primarily through what grownups DO in front of them, what they model for them. The behavior of the parents involved in these events has been an education in racism as well as how to devalue the work of the people—teachers and administrators - who serve their children every day.

My recommendations as an expert in this area are many. Because of time, I begin with 1) the parents who have interfered who sit in positions of power need to reflect and offer apology to the community -- children included -- and/or step down; and 2) the community needs to counter the lessons the children have learned over the past few months, beginning with a restorative justice circle- facilitated by an expert who identifies as a person of the global majority - with consistent and ongoing lessons about the global majority and how to communicate across difference.

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY RE: RECENT RACIAL INCIDENTS

Written by the Equity Advisory Committee 5/14/2024

As the Equity Advisory Committee, the board has tasked us with the responsibility of centering equity issues for our community. In recent weeks, multiple incidents of racial harassment among students at the 4/5 and middle school level were identified. The Equity Advisory Committee would like to highlight the importance of an equity-centered process of responding to incidents of racial harassment and recommend strategic action moving forward toward racial justice and healing for our community.

First, in terms of responding to students who acted as agents in these incidents – it is critical that administrators and staff understand and adhere to a consistent and an immediate sequence of action to hold students accountable when such incidents occur. Suspensions *did* take place in response to some of these incidents and *is* warranted when students violate anti-harassment policies (see below). Suspension in these cases is considered best practice in area schools ([Ann Arbor](#), [Saline](#), and [Ypsilanti](#)). At HCCS, we practice restorative justice, which can still encompass suspension in cases like this. Taking a restorative approach, suspension includes 1-3 days for students to leave the environment in which they perpetrated harm to reflect on their actions and take responsibility for the harm they caused. The goal is to support them in more skillful behavior upon return to the community. Suspension also is an important measure to take in terms of adhering to our school's proclaimed social justice values (see [Social Justice Statement](#)) to demonstrate intolerance for hateful speech and actions targeting marginalized groups (regarding race or other identities).

All parents want what's best for their children. We all want to protect our children from harm; we especially want to guard them from being targeted for any of their marginalized identities. Racial harassment has been shown to cause long-lasting psychological harm, trauma, and PTSD ([source](#) & [source](#)). The needs and feelings of children targeted in such incidents must be centered. Those who caused harm must be held accountable for their actions. Both sides of this restorative effort are healing. Accountability is healing. Accountability is required for our community to move forward together.

A painful reality that must be named here is that our school has long been considered a place of non-belonging or even as "unsafe" for kids and families of color. We have data ([see data compiled from WISD 2014-2019](#); updated data is coming soon) that show the disproportionate rate at which families of color leave the school, Black families in particular. We cannot afford to lose more families of color. (Racial diversity is one aspect that makes our school community a rich place for connecting and learning. Diversity in our population of students/families is also essential to embodying our equity values.) The harm done to students of color who are targeted by racist comments is undoable. Families have entrusted their children to our school community, and we have continuously espoused equity values. We must respond directly to racial harm in order to live up to our equity values.

If families of color *do* choose to leave based on the harm done in these incidents, that's on us. All of the children in this school are our responsibility as a community. We are responsible for creating accountability structures to make sure that students of color experience the same sense of belonging and safety as white students. This requires preventative and responsive action. To date, Kevin, Lindsey, the board, and staff have been working hard to center equity in various initiatives and policies. We appreciate this proactive effort. In this moment of crisis, when harm has been done, we must take action to prioritize the voices, emotions, and needs of those directly impacted. In this letter, we are stating our emphatic support for families impacted in these incidents of racial harm and calling for policy revisions that codify our equity values.

It is important to note that our school has a larger-than-average population of neurodivergent students. As such, we might feel more hesitant to enact punitive measures in response to racial incidents. But we must examine the identities of all parties involved and *center the experience of those targeted* (for race or any marginalized identity) while also taking into account the specific needs of neurodivergent students if they caused harm. We cannot allow racism to go unchecked in our school environment, regardless of

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

neuro-ability. This follows best practices from other schools in the area (*see notes below). We must hold any student who perpetrates harm accountable for their actions in a developmentally appropriate way. This should include the possibility of suspensions for students who engage in racial harassment, regardless of the perpetrator's identity. We can be loving, kind, *and* just in our responses to any student who causes harm. And this ultimately serves the higher purpose of guiding young people to become caring adults.

We are particularly concerned by the way systemic whiteness has been playing out over recent weeks. This has been demonstrated by *white fragility* - the emotional reactivity of white families that prohibits learning and accountability; *white privilege* - the expectations of white families to receive comfort; and *white supremacy culture* - the upholding of white families' needs and wellbeing over those of families of color. This is a predictable and common response to incidents like these. Whiteness is a system that perpetuates its power by pushing back against the naming of racism and racialized harm. We all want to protect our children from experiencing shame as a result of their actions, *and* this fear cannot stand in the way of adequately addressing harm done. As the adults in this community, this is our chance to live our values for our youth – by coming together in this moment and being honest about the racial dynamics underlying our responses to the racial harm committed by children. If we ignore this moment and/or let families of color continue to feel unseen/unheard, it will be devastating to our community. It would be deeply unjust to let these dynamics go unnamed and watch families of color leave the school due to experiencing racial harassment. Our naming is an act of accountability - necessary but not sufficient - and is required to move our community toward justice and healing.

We are grateful to have administrators who we explicitly hired having asked questions about their equity experience and intentions. Our administrators have consistently prioritized equity over the past two school years. Our staff has been trained by the Justice Leaders Collaborative and continues to engage in regular equity training. Our board is committed to centering equity and will engage in equity-centered professional development this summer and in the new year. We are grateful for these efforts which are a necessary piece of centering equity in our community; policy is another critical piece. We request that this letter informs policy revisions to the Parent Handbook as it is reviewed this summer and approved by the board. We will work closely with administration and the board to be sure that happens.

Doing this hard work is *exactly* what we've been talking about as we name equity as a central value. It is uncomfortable. It brings up challenging emotions. And it is how we actually *practice equity in community*.

Thank you,
Grace Helms-Kotre, Fernanda Cross, Taryn Gal
HCCS Equity Advisory Committee

***NOTES: Information on local schools' behavior policies:**

From [AAPS Handbook](#).

- Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)
 - Within ten (10) school days of any decision to change the placement of a student with a disability because of a violation of the Code of Conduct, the school district, the parent/guardian, and any other relevant members of the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team or Section 504 team will review all relevant information to determine whether the conduct subject to discipline was:
 - Caused by, or was in direct and substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or;
 - A direct result of the school district's failure to implement the IEP or Section 504 plan.
 - If either statement is true, the behavior is considered a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary response is immediately discontinued and:
 - The IEP team will conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and implement a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) for the student, or, if a BIP has been developed, review the existing plan and modify it as necessary to address the behavior.

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

- The school district will take immediate steps to remedy any deficiencies in the implementation of the current IEP or Section 504 plan.
- If the behavior is found not to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the disciplinary consequences may be applied and the team will determine the manner in which the student will continue to be provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
- When the behavior subject to disciplinary action involves drugs, dangerous weapons, or if the student is deemed to be a danger to themselves or others, the IEP team or Section 504 team, as applicable, shall determine an interim alternative placement and the educational services to be provided for up to forty-five (45) school days.

From Ypsilanti Community Schools:

- Procedures Applicable to Special Education and Section 504 Students:
 - 1. Unless modified by an Individual Education Plan (IEP), a student with a disability is expected to follow the same rules as general education students and is subject to the same discipline procedures, as long as the discipline does not exceed ten (10) school days of suspension.

Policy references are below to highlight behavior policies already in HCCS Handbooks

Excerpts taken from Honey Creek's handbook:

Behavior Consequences

Students who misbehave are generally addressed through classroom procedures. However, should a student be referred to the office, the following consequences will be used:

1st: Discussion with the principal/asst. principal; parents notified

2nd: Discussion with the principal/asst. principal; possible detention; parents notified

3rd: Parent conference is required and consequences are determined by administration

As deemed necessary by the principal or director, severity of the misbehavior may warrant skipping over preliminary consequences to a more severe consequence or to entirely different consequences. This may include suspension from class and/or school. The principal or director may utilize discretion in determining appropriate consequences in any circumstance.

Student misbehavior may result in the student being verbally corrected/warned, the sending home of a disciplinary email for parent information, a phone call to parents, restorative practice measures, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion. If a specific misbehavior is not listed in the policy, disciplinary action will depend on the nature and severity of the infraction, the student's behavior record, and other relevant circumstances. If suspended and school is canceled, suspension will be on the next school day. If a student or parent wishes to appeal the discipline assigned, it must be done within 48 hours of the infraction.

Excerpts taken from Honey Creek's Board Policies: Anti-harassment

General Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to maintain an education and work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment. This commitment applies to all Academy operations, programs, and activities. All students, administrators, teachers, staff, and all other school personnel share responsibility for avoiding, discouraging, and reporting any form of unlawful harassment. This policy applies to unlawful conduct occurring on Academy property, or at another location if such conduct occurs during an activity sponsored by the Board.

The Board, through its administration, will vigorously enforce its prohibition against discriminatory harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, height, weight, martial or family status, military status ancestry, or genetic information

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.

(collectively, "Protected Classes") that are protected by Federal civil rights laws (hereinafter referred to as unlawful harassment), and encourages those within the Academy community as well as Third Parties, who feel aggrieved to seek assistance to rectify such problems. The Board will investigate all allegations of harassment and in those cases where unlawful harassment is substantiated, the Board will take immediate steps to end the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and remedy its effects. Individuals who are found to have engaged in unlawful harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Other Violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy

The Board will also take immediate steps to impose disciplinary action on individuals engaging in any of the following prohibited acts:

- A. Retaliating against a person who has made a report or filed a complaint alleging unlawful harassment, or who has participated as a witness in a harassment investigation.
- B. Filing a malicious or knowingly false report or complaint of unlawful harassment.
- C. Disregarding, failing to investigate adequately, or delaying investigation of allegations of unlawful harassment, when responsibility for reporting and/or investigating harassment charges comprises part of one's supervisory duties.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

The Board of Trustees acknowledges conduct is closely related to learning and an effective instructional program requires an orderly school environment, as reflected in the behavior of students.

The Board shall require each student of this Academy to adhere to the Code of Conduct established by the administration and submit to such disciplinary measures, appropriately assigned for infraction of those rules. Such rules shall require students to do the following:

- A. respect other persons and their property;
- B. preserve the degree of order necessary for the educational program in which they are engaged;
- C. respect the rights of others;
- D. obey the constituted authority and respond with respect to those who hold that authority.

The Executive Director shall develop Administrative Procedures for student conduct (Code of Conduct) that carry out the purposes of this policy and have the following characteristics:

- A. focus on the need to maintain a school environment conducive to learning;
- B. do not discriminate among students;
- C. do not demean students;
- D. do not violate any individual rights constitutionally guaranteed to students.

The Executive Director shall also designate consequences, excluding corporal punishment, for the infractions of rules in the Code of Conduct. The consequences shall accomplish the following:

- A. Safeguard the due process rights of all students
- B. Attain consistency in consequence in nature with past- and best-practice
- C. relate in kind and degree to the infraction;
- D. require the student to take responsibility for his/her actions;
- E. reduce the effects of any harm caused by the student's misconduct.

This is not a public meeting; rather it is a meeting of the Honey Creek Board of Trustees held in public. Provision for public comment is available at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is limited to three minutes. Speakers must be recognized by the Board President and state their name and address for the official record. Complaints concerning school personnel or students cannot be discussed in an open meeting unless done in compliance with Public Act 267 of 1967. Such complaints should be forwarded to the Executive Director unless he/she is the subject of the complaint in which case it should be processed through the Board President. Upon request, we shall make all reasonable accommodations for a disabled person to attend this meeting.