

Hatikvah International Academy Charter School

7 Lexington Avenue
East Brunswick, NJ
MEETING Minutes
January 21, 2021

7:00 P.M. Meeting

Meeting called to order by Daniel Gresack at 7:00 PM.

Sunshine Law Notice: The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the rights of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of the public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Hatikvah International Academy Charter School has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time, and place thereof posted in the Home News Tribune and the East Brunswick Sentinel.

This meeting is taking place on Zoom. The public was informed of the participation number on the school's website and on the front door of the building in addition to the newspaper postings.

Name	Title	Voting/Non-Voting	Present	Absent
Mr. Daniel Gresack	President	Voting	X	
Mr. Harish Hathiramani	Vice President	Voting	X	
Mr. Eli Schaap	Trustee; Chair of Finance Committee; Nominating Committee	Voting	X	
Mr. Marc Herman	Trustee	Voting	X	
Ms. Shawntell Manning	Trustee	Voting	X	
Mr. Arie Behar	Trustee	Voting	X	
Dr. Marcia Grayson	Director; Ex Officio	Non-voting	X	
Mrs. Kathy Mone	SBA; Ex Officio	Non-voting		X
Ms. Claudia Fiel	Teacher Representative; Recording Secretary	Non-voting	X	
Mrs. Nicole Disporto	Alternate Teacher Representative	Non-voting	X	

Pledge of Allegiance: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United State of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Public Discussion: A 15-minute period is provided for the public to ask questions on agenda items or to make statements to the Board of Trustees. If there are many speakers, the chair will ask for a 3-minute speaking limit per speaker. The board may extend the public comment portion if necessary.

10 members of the public were present.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES COMMITTEES

Education Committee: The Department of Education is currently planning to administer NJSLA State testing in some form this year. They realize all of the challenges that such testing would mean, and the NJ Charter School office realizes that their previous requirement to tie testing to high-stakes decisions for charters would need to be tweaked to match such challenges, although it is still premature to make any decisions about this. The State appears to be waiting for the new national administration to provide guidance on testing which would be needed in order to forego it this year. Short of this guidance, we will be looking for the State's direction on how we are to administer tests.

Administrative Liaison: Dr. Marcia Grayson
Committee Members: Mrs. Hindie Weissman

Financial Committee: PPP Grant was forgiven by the SBA.

Chairperson: Mr. Eli Schaap
Administrative Liaison: Dr. Marcia Grayson
Committee Member: Mr. Daniel Gresack

Fundraising Committee: no report.

Chairperson: Shawntell Manning
Administrative Liaison: Dr. Marcia

Nominating Committee: no report.

Chairperson: Mr. Eli Schaap
Administrative Liaison: Dr. Marcia Grayson

Director's Report: I am pleased to report that I have won a Digital Divide Grant in the amount of \$7,500.00 which I will be asking you to approve this evening and have increased the non-restricted fundraising total to \$46,391.00. With these two accomplishments, we have replenished the deficit in the budget for unfunded PPE necessities this year and have begun to cover some of our technology needs with the school's entire supply of K-5 computers loaned out to students who are learning remotely. In reviewing our East Brunswick applicants for kindergarten, we are currently at 31 students (siblings and new applicants) of the 129 registered for the lottery to date and 31 of the 129 are siblings. In fact, the numbers that you see on the dashboard for lottery applicants are relatively low across all grade levels compared to any other year at this same time and the only difference between last year and every other year is the pandemic. For East Brunswick applicants, I would like to see us gain at least a dozen more before March. I have reached out to many of our East Brunswick families in kindergarten to help us increase this number and our recruitment/receptionist started her calling and texting campaign to try to increase the numbers. I have asked her to start calling the daycare/preschool settings where our applicants attend to see if we can distribute materials there and our annual advertisement should be coming out in newspapers, even though these activities have not resulted in any real shifts in our numbers in past years. I will be asking our entire school population to help us recruit students from all districts since these numbers must remain strong even though we are dealing with a completely different kind of schooling right now. It is our parents who have always been our best recruiters. We are anticipating several fewer seats available in kindergarten than in a typical year since remote learning will likely cause some families, in consultation with our teachers and administrators, to retain children for in-person learning next school year since children will have missed more than 50 days of in-person schooling and for kindergarten through second grade students, this translates to so much lost learning time, especially compared to higher grades where it is only slightly easier to work with students since they have a greater ability to work with text and complete assignments that do not have the need for manipulatives which the teachers cannot see and comment on via Zoom. Yesterday, I submitted a large grant for Student Learning Loss to the Department of Education which is also on the agenda this evening. This grant would allow us to run a summer acceleration academy for those students who have experienced the most learning loss including children with special needs, free and reduced lunch students, English language learners, African American children, and Latinx students. We received a notice yesterday from the Middlesex County Superintendent's office that Middlesex remains in the COVID red zone. I spoke with the County Superintendent last Friday after the health department asked us to follow the table in their COVID guidance to stay fully remote at least until February 4. He concurred that we are taking the right approach now in following the health department's recommendations.

SBA: Mrs. Kathy Mone: no report.

Acknowledgement of Correspondence: None

ITEM 1: Motion to approve the minutes from December 10, 2020 meeting.

Motion: Eli Schaap

Second: Harish Hathiramani

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee			X	

Passed 5-0; 1 abstention.

ITEM 2: Motion to approve the bills list dated December 8, 2020 to January 15, 2021 in the amount of \$116,125.36 and to approve the Secretary's Report dated January 15, 2021.

Motion: Daniel Gresack

Second: Shawntell Manning

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			

Arie Behar	Trustee	X			
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Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 3: Motion to approve the following grant items:

1. Acceptance of a Digital Divide Grant in the amount of \$7,500.00.
2. Submission of Student Learning Loss Grant in the amount of \$156,425.00 (there are 16 awards available across the State of NJ and we are paying \$4,000.00 to Tier Consulting for research and writing work on this grant).
3. Approval for Marcia Grayson and Tier Consulting Services to work on a grant for Charter School Expansion beginning in mid-February and for Marcia Grayson to submit such a grant by March 31, 2021. Please note that the grant writer's research and writing work is estimated to be up to \$12,000.00. An exact amount will appear later on the bills list. The grant award is in the range of \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00 and will be written to include increasing faculty/personnel and instructional materials and supplies.

Motion: Daniel Gresack

Second: Arie Behar

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 4: Motion to approve the following personnel items regarding faculty/staff for the 2020-2021 school year:

Certificated Faculty:

1. CHANGE IN STATUS: Theresa LaRocca from Teaching Assistant to Temporary Leave Replacement Special Education Teacher from January 19, 2021 through the end of a teacher's medical leave which is currently estimated to be June 10, 2021 at which point, the Director will determine whether it is in the best interest of the students to return to the previous status or to remain in this temporary role through

the final days of the school year. A salary increase of \$26,477.00 will be prorated during this period to include the actual days.

2. Substitute Nurse Stephen Shanko from January 21, 2021 through the end of the school year at a rate of \$250.00 per seven-hour day.

Non-Certificated:

Audrey Hausser, temporary teaching assistant, at a salary of \$15.00 per hour or \$105.00 for full days of school. Mrs. Hausser’s start date is 1/20/2021. Mrs. Hausser’s end date for her temporary period of employment will match that of Mrs. LaRocca’s temporary period of employment.

Adjustments in contracts:

Rebecca Cruz, Special Education and ELL Teacher: Stipend of \$1,650.00 for increased ELL work.

Motion: Marc Herman

Second: Harish Hathiramani

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 5: Motion to approve the following changes to the school’s Ameriflex Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) and Dependent Care Accounts (DCA) that were authorized through an expanded COVID-19 relief bill called the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021:

1. **Rollovers** - Allow employees to carry over all unused amounts in an FSA and/or DCA from the 2020 or 2021 plan year to the next plan year.
2. **Grace Periods** - Extend the FSA grace period from 2 1/2 months to 12 months following the end of the plan years for those plan years that end in 2020 or 2021.
3. **Qualifying Dependent Age** - Allow reimbursement for expenses incurred for a child through the plan year where the child attains age 14 (this helps address a situation where a child attained

age 13 during the pandemic, therefore, the parent may not have been able to use the funds because school or daycare was closed).

4. **Election Changes** - Permit prospective mid-year election changes without regard to a change in status in order to accommodate these updates.

Motion: Daniel Gresack

Second: Shawntell Manning

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 6: Motion to move into Closed Session at 7:32 PM to discuss potential litigation.

Motion: Daniel Gresack

Second: Marc Herman

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			

Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 7: Motion to move into Open Session at 8:27 PM after having discussed potential litigation.

Motion: Shawntell Manning

Second: Marc Herman

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			
Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.

ITEM 8: Motion to adjourn at 8:28 PM (back in the general meeting link).

Motion: Daniel Gresack

Second: Marc Herman

Board Member	Voting	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent
Daniel Gresack	Trustee	X			
Eli Schaap	Trustee	X			
Marc Herman	Trustee	X			

Harish Hathiramani	Trustee	X			
Shawntell Manning	Trustee	X			
Arie Behar	Trustee	X			

Passed 6-0; no abstentions.