HOPE COMMUNITY ACADEMY
HMONG LANGUAGE & CULTURE SCHOOL

720 PAYNE AVENUE, ST. PAUL, MN 55130
OFFICE: (651) 796-4500
WWW.HOPECOMMUNITYACADEMY.ORG

MISSION
To inspire students to achieve high academic success while embracing Hmong language and culture.

VISION
To be a public school of excellence, with high quality staff, diverse programs, and successful students.

HOPE Community Academy
MINUTES
September 24, 2026
Conference Room – 5:00 pm

Minutes
I. Call to Order (Action) at 5:12 PM Roll-call Present: Mai Nhia Lor, Agnes Espino, Lee Xiong, Daniel Roeun, Yang Lor, Bao Lee, Dr. Kevin Xiong, Guests: Absent: Reona Vang
II. Rules of Engagement • Be here now • Be a leader and a team player • Be a good steward Reminder of HOPE's mission and vision.
III. Approval of Agenda (Action) Lee Xiong motion to approve agenda, Yang Lor second, all approved. Agenda on the table. **Lee Xiong amended the motion to move ED Report first and move Consent Agenda down the agenda to accommodate Dr. Xiong's schedule. 7 to 5. All approved. Motion carries**
IV. Welcome Board chair welcomes all to the board meeting.
V. Executive Director's Report

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Academic Turnaround Update

We continue to work with UST and met with Danielle two weeks ago about the turn around plan (all BOD have access to) including curriculum updates, school visits, etc.

Standing Agenda Items

- ADM and ADA Update
    - 900 students enrolled as of 9/24
    - 20 students absent on Monday 9/21 - which may impact ADM.
    - Have one week to increase ADM number - for the 10/1 official date
- Academic Updates
    - Finished Fast Bridge testing last week
    - Preliminary numbers show MCA reading scores improved by 1.1%
- Hmong Language and Culture
    - Program going well - with 9th grade Hmong class and Hmong Performing Arts added to courses.
    - High school Hmong teacher recently left, currently interviewing candidates.
- Operations Plan
    - Starting a dinner program for after school program, will have a desk review/audit of the program soon
    - Recently hired in-house building manager
- Student/Family Impact
    - Will have first PAC meeting in October - Trunk or Treat October 22
    - Still figuring out details of 501c3 for the PAC.

Fall Assessments Updates

Still have a few students doing make up; will have updates for the Board in October - particularly in identifying students for after school targeted tutoring.

School Calendar - (Action)

BOD approved calendar back in May but there is one date that needs to change. Tuesday, Nov 3 needs to be virtual/remote day due to school being a polling location.

Yang Lor motion to amend the school calendar for Tuesday, November 3rd to be a virtual/remote school day. Lee Xiong second. All approved. Motion carries to move Nov. 3 to a virtual/remote day.

Discussion: Once the board approves, the school will post a new calendar on the website and send notifications to families about the change.

Title Audit

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HOPE was randomly selected for a Title audit this year. Title funding supports schools with a high proportion of low-income students. Dr. K will be working with Wouang and anticipates a smooth audit process.

Student Increase Impact
Student enrollment increased from 700 to 920 this year, which is a significant achievement. However, the growth also created unanticipated costs for additional furniture, Chromebooks, curriculum needs and other student needs, which has impacted the school's finances. Dr. K will work with Reona to review the financials and provide an update to the Board in October.

Policy Dashboard Updates
Dr. K working with Mai Ka to update policies so the Board will start to see policies for approval in consent agenda in upcoming meetings.

After School Program and Targeted Tutoring
Enrichment afterschool activities starting on Oct 5th. The soccer boys won their first game last week.

Attorney Designation - Hli Xyooj (Action)
The BOD is required to formally designate a licensed attorney for the school. Dr. K has been working with Hli Xiong who is willing to be retained at $2,500 per month for unlimited services and has also agreed to review all school policies. HOPE's previous attorney charges $800 per hour. Another attorney was considered through the bid process, but their rates were higher due to being part of a law firm. Hli is an independent attorney who practices out of her home. Dr. K has worked with her in other capacities and is familiar with her experience. Attorney fees will be categorized under 'contracted services" on the budget. These costs are already accounted for in the existing budget and do not require additional funding beyond what has already been budgeted.

Yang Lor motion to designate Hli Xiong as HOPE's designated attorney. Bao second. All approve. Motion carries approving Hli Xyooj as HOPE's attorney of record.

Discussion: The designated attorney will serve as HOPE's primary resource for legal advice and legal matters. For example, last year HOPE's former attorney conducted an investigation involving a previous employee and also assisted with a civil claim involving the school. As HOPE continues to grow in both staff and student enrollment, Hli is expected to have greater capacity to support the school as she transitions away from previous attorney and focuses more on litigation work. She also provides legal services to the Hmong Early Education group so she is familiar with our kind of work.

VI. Community Comments

Yang Lor, parent: raised concerns about transportation, particularly with the transition to the new bus company. There have been delays in student pick-up times, resulting in students waiting longer at the bus stops and arriving late to class. While this has been manageable in the current weather, Yang noted that it could

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become a greater concern during the winter and potentially affect enrollment or student retention.Encourages the Board to consider how transportation challenges are being addressed and improved throughout the school year.

Agnes Espino, teacher: shared that there were several transportation challenges during the first week of school but noted significant improvement over the past week.

Danielle Miller, Authorizer: congratulated the school on enrollment growth and recognized the enrollment team for their efforts in achieving such a significant increase.

Mai Nhia Lor: shared that the MDE building is gone.

VII. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. August's Board Meeting Minutes
B. June 2026 HCA Building Company Board Minutes
C. New Hire Report
D. Expulsion Policy

Lee Xiong motion to approve Consent Agenda, Daniel Roeun second.

Discussion:

- Expulsion policy: the Board requested revisions to the Level 1B language. Change "up to 0-1 day" to "up to 1 day" and revise the final sentence regarding "maybe a day in OSS" because it appears to contradict the earlier language. The Board also noted that the policy does not currently address students with disabilities IEPs, mental health needs, or significant family circumstances. The Board would like language added to clarify how these situations should be considered, with an emphasis on supporting students rather than creating additional barriers.
- New hire report: the Board asked for clarification on whether the listed positions are already included in the approved budget or represent new, unbudgeted positions.
- HCA agenda: the Board previously voted to seat Mai Nhia, Reona, and Jessie on the company board.

Lee Xiong amended the motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the request revisions to the Expulsion Policy and a follow up report at the next Board meeting showing the salaries for the new hires. All approve. Motion carries. Consent agenda is approved.

VIII. Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Mai Nhia and Reona met on September 8 regarding the evaluation process. The Board has appointed six individuals to participate in the evaluation. The Board will schedule a special closed meeting to review the evaluation unless Dr. K submits a written request for the meeting to remain open.

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Evaluators have until September 30 to submit their responses, and the Board has until October 15th to finalize the evaluation. Board members were also asked to begin considering contract renewal and any items they would like included in Dr. K's contract.

Next Exec meeting: Oct 13th at 5 PM

Operations Committee

Yang, Dr. K, and Lee met on September 16. The Board Participation Tracker was updated, and each Board member is expected to participate in at least three activities during the year and update the tracker as activities are completed.

The group also discussed holding a Board training in November or December, reviewed the Board election timeline, and noted that the election process will begin in January.

Next meeting: Oct 21st at 5 PM

Finance Committee

The committee met on September 22 and discussed the finance report. The school is approximately 16% through the fiscal year, but several budget line items have already exceeded that percentage. Increased student enrollment has also resulted in increased expenses. Dr. K will present an updated budget at the upcoming Board meeting.

Audit**:** Jessie's team is working on providing the requested documents to the auditors. Audit findings will be shared with the Board once available.

Enrollment**:** Updated enrollment numbers will be shared once final reporting is available.

Note: The board reviewed, discussed, and filed the financial report subject to audit.

Next meeting: Oct 20th at 4pm

IX. Existing Business

No updates

X. New Business

No updates

XI. Adjournment

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Yang Lor motion to adjourn. Agnes Espino second. All approve. Meeting adjourned at 6:23pm

Next Board Meeting: October 22, 2026