

**HAMMOND
ACADEMY**
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



**REGULAR MEETING
of the
Board of Directors
Hammond Urban Academy, Inc.
To be held at Hammond Academy of Science and
Technology conference room
33 Muenich Ct.
Hammond, Indiana 46320
219-852-0500**

This meeting is a meeting of the School Board in public for the purpose of conducting the School business and is not to be considered a public community meeting.
There will be a time for public participation.

Public Meeting

A G E N D A

March 24, 2026

4:00 P.M.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll call to establish a quorum
- III. Approval of Minutes
 - A. [February Minutes](#)
 - B. [Executive Session- Board Governance 3/17/26](#)
- IV. Correspondence
- V. School Board Committee Reports
 - Finance Committee
 - Personnel Committee
 - Community Relations Committee
 - By Laws Committee- First Meeting was 2/19 2:30 Next Meeting is
- VI. Administration Reports
 - A. [School Leader updates -](#)
 - B. [CCSJ Monthly Report](#)
 - 1. [February](#)
 - C. Asst. Superintendent/ Principal-
 - D. Technology Director-
 - E. Athletic Director/ Dean
 - F. CFO- Financial Reports
- VII. Approval of Payments (*Consent Agenda*)
- VIII. Personnel (*Employment is contingent upon new hire screening and required certification*)
 - A. [Retirement of Susan Leonard-Balchak Special Education](#)
 - B. Approval of Employment of Michelle Burkholder Instructional Aide for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year.
- IX. New Business
 - A. [Request for Teacher Appreciation Stipend Funding](#)
 - B. [Request for Bus funding for Science Olympiad](#)
 - C. [A-F Accountability](#)
 - D. [HAST Teacher of the Year](#)
 - E. [HAST Summer School 2026](#)
- XI. Public Comment

HAMMOND URBAN ACADEMY, INC.
School Board Meeting Minutes Noted
February 19th, 2026

In Attendance

Board Members:

- Kris Sakelaris (Board President)
- Dave Ryan
- Cynthia Rangel (Parent Board Member)
- Owana Miller
- Melissa Campbell
- Janet Venecz
- Victor Lopez
- Nicole Bazan (Parent Board Member)

School Representatives:

- Dr. Deb Snedden (Superintendent / School Leader)
- Jeff Wood (School Principal / Assistant Superintendent)
- Tracy Mis (Asst. Principal)
- Debbie Czmieł (Chief Financial Officer)

Not in Attendance

- Mira Projovic (Teacher Board Member)
- Lynette Montes (Student Board Member)
- Monica Rubio
- Megan Moore
- Kevin Smith (Attorney)
- Ross Smith (Technology Director)
- Walter Woghiren (Dean of Students / Athletic Director)

The board meeting was called to order at 4:28 pm by Board President Kris Sakelaris.

Motions Approved by School Board

- *Motion to approve January 2026 Meeting Minutes* — Dave Ryan motioned; seconded by Cynthia Rangel. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve January Financials* — Owana Miller motioned; seconded by Melissa Campbell. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve the employment of Matthew Guritz temporary contract teaching government & economics for the remainder of the 2025-26 school year* — Dave Ryan motioned; seconded by Owana Miller. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve the HAST Board Letter of Rep 2026* — Owana Miller motioned; seconded by Dave Ryan. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve the Licensed & Shared Parking Agreement with Hammond LaSalle LLC* — Owana Miller motioned; seconded by Janet Venecz. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve the IPAD Insurance Policy 2026-27* — Owana Miller motioned; seconded by Janet Venecz. All in favor motion approved 8-0.
- *Motion to approve Policy 4434 & Policy 4438* — Melissa Campbell motioned; seconded by Cynthia Rangel. All in favor motion approved 8-0.

- *Motion to adjourn* — Cynthia Rangel motioned; seconded by Melissa Campbell. All in favor approved 8-0.

New Correspondence

School Leader Report

Committee Reports

- **Finance Committee**- Committee did not report.
- **Personnel Committee**- Kris met with Janet Venecz & she has 2 issues to report:
 - Monica Rubio is leaving the Board & per the by-laws the member replacing her must have a banking background. Monica is recommending someone & they will then be vetted by the committee.
 - Dr. Snedden's yearly evaluation will take place before the school year ends.
- **Community Relations Committee**- Committee did not report.

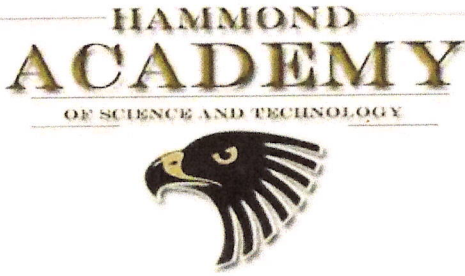
Discussion Notes

Board Financial Inquiries

New Business

Public Comment

Meeting Adjourned at 5:18 p.m.



HAST School board

Kris Sakelaris
Dave Ryan
Owana Miller
Monica Rubio
Megan Moore
Mira Projovic
Nicole Bazan
Cynthia Rangle
Victor Lopez
Melissa Campbell
Lynette Montes

HAST Admin.

Dr. Deborah Snedden
Jeff Wood
Deborah Czmieł

Hammond Academy School Corporation – Closed Executive Session

March 17, 2026
10:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
CCSJ

HAST school board will meet in a closed executive session in accordance with IND. Code § 5-14-1.5-5 and IND. Code § 5-14-1.5-6.1, and for any reason authorized by federal or state statute on Tuesday March 17th at CCSJ for the following purposes:

- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(1) Where authorized by federal or state statute.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(B) Initiation of litigation or litigation that is either pending or has been threatened specifically in writing. As used in this clause, "litigation" includes any judicial action or administrative law proceeding under federal or state law.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(C) The implementation of the security system.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(D) The purchase or lease of real property by the governing body up to the time a contract or option to purchase or lease is executed by the parties.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(2)(E) School consolidation.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(3) For discussion of the assessment, design, and implementation of school safety and security measures, plans and systems
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(4) Interviews and negotiations with industrial or commercial prospects or agents of industrial or commercial prospects for the enumerated instances identified in I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(4)(A-H)
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(5) To receive information about, and interview, prospective employees.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(6) With respect to any individual over whom the governing body has jurisdiction: (A) to receive information concerning the individual's alleged misconduct; and (B) to discuss, before a determination, the individual's status as an employee, a student, or an independent contractor who is: (i) a physician; or (ii) a school bus driver.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(7) For discussion of records classified as confidential by state or federal statute.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(8) To discuss before a placement decision an individual student's ability, past performance, behavior, and needs.
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(9) To discuss a job performance evaluation of individual employees. This subdivision does not apply to a discussion of the salary, compensation, or benefits of employees during a budget process.
- ☒ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(10) To train school board members with an outside consultant about the performance of the role of the members as public officials
- ☐ I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(11) To consider the appointment of a public official, as enumerated in I.C. § 5-14-1.5-6.1(b)(10)(A-C).



**School Leader Report
HAST Board Meeting
March 24, 2026**

Mission Moment

I want to take a moment to thank our Board for approving the funding for transportation to the State Science Olympiad competition.

This was not something we had planned for in advance, and due to the timing, our students did not have the opportunity to fundraise. Because of your support, 27 of our students will now be able to represent HAST at the state level.

This is a newer program with a newer coach, and what these students have accomplished in such a short time is truly impressive.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and our programs.

Student Outcomes

We are continuing to stay focused on student growth and accountability as we move into this final stretch before spring break.

- Student-Led Conferences (SLCs) are taking place this week. These are not optional. This is where students take ownership of their learning, reflect on progress, and communicate directly with their families.
- We continue to utilize ILEARN Checkpoints and IXL to monitor student growth and adjust instruction in real time.
- Our IE blocks continue to provide targeted support, especially at the middle school level.

Financial Oversight

We continue to be very intentional with our funding.

- All Title I, Title III, and Title IV funds are being monitored closely to ensure they are directly supporting student outcomes.

- As a reminder, we do not have the same funding structure as traditional districts—we rely heavily on ADM and grants, so every decision matters.
- We are applying for the digital learning grant for the 2026-2027 to fund AI Khamingo again.
- We are beginning the work on budgets meeting with various departments.

We also brought forward and received approval for transportation for our Science Olympiad team as they qualified for State. This is a great example of aligning resources to student opportunity.

Leadership / Personnel Updates

We continue to work through staffing and leadership transitions.

- With upcoming retirements, we are planning for continuity and stability. We are redoing operational chart as well as updating job descriptions. We are looking to add a fulltime SRO for the 2026-2027 school year that would be paid with the school safety grant. This person would be on sight full time and be available to help mentor our students as well as oversee HAST safety plans.

We are also continuing to:

- Recognize staff who are doing the work and going above and beyond through our weekly newsletter and shout outs.
- Spring evaluations are taking place now.

Strategic Discussion / Operations Updates

There is a lot happening, and we are staying focused on alignment and compliance.

- We are continuing to align our work to Indiana accountability updates, including A–F metrics and graduation pathways.
- We are reinforcing school-wide expectations, including:
 - Attendance
 - Tardies
 - Classroom procedures

We are also continuing to:

- Review and refine enrollment processes to ensure compliance with Indiana law
- Plan ahead for scheduling and programming, including implementation of block for 2026-2027

Enrollment 2025-2026

Current

6 - 100
7 - 99
8 - 98
9 - 81
10 - 71
11 - 69
12 - 75 Total 593

2026-2027

6 - 83
7 - 97
8 - 97
9 - 89
10 - 78
11 - 69
12 - 66 Total 579

Waitlist 25-26

6 - 64
7 - 123
8 - 86
9 - 188
10 - 55
11 - 177
12 - 277 Total 980

Notified not registered:

7 - 3
8 - 1
9 - 1
10 - 1
11 - 1 Total 7

Class of 2026 Data

Current scholarships: \$3,836,991



Charter School Monthly Report

School:

February, 2026

Please Submit by March 15, 2026

Attendance Rates

MONTH: February 2026

GRADE:	ATTENDANCE RATE BY COHORT
6th	93.16
7th	93.57
8th	92.87
9th	93.50
10th	93.55
11th	93.91
12th	93.61
Total	93.48

CCSJ Charter

AUTHORITY LLC

2400 New York Avenue
Whiting, Indiana 46394

(219) 473-7770

ccsj.edu



DISCIPLINE

MONTH: February 2026

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS ELEMENTARY (K-5)	NUMBER OF UNIQUE STUDENTS THAT RECEIVED REFERRAL(S)	PERCENTAGE

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)	NUMBER OF UNIQUE STUDENTS THAT RECEIVED REFERRAL(S)	PERCENTAGE
297	40	13.4%

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)	NUMBER OF UNIQUE STUDENTS THAT RECEIVED REFERRAL(S)	PERCENTAGE
296	89	29.7 (mostly tardies)

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS ELEMENTARY (K-5)	NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS	PERCENTAGE

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)	NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS	PERCENTAGE
297	8	2.69%

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENROLLED STUDENTS HIGH SCHOOL (9-12)	NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS	PERCENTAGE
9	296	3.04%

Retirement

Susan Leonard-Balchak <sleonard-balchak@hammondacademy.org>

Mon, Feb 23, 2026 at 7:24 AM

To: Deborah Snedden <dsnedden@hammondacademy.org>

Cc: Jeff Wood <jwood@hammondacademy.org>, Tracy Mis <tmis@hammondacademy.org>, Olivia Taskoff <otaskoff@hammondacademy.org>

Well- here goes! I am at the age where I need to reduce the number of hours I work each week and I am announcing my retirement from full time teaching at the end of the school year. I would like to stay on as a substitute teacher, if you are willing to keep me. Thank you for all of the many opportunities HAST has provided me. I remember now how education became my passion; it's the family atmosphere. Thanks for the support and wisdom, and although we may not have always seen eye to eye, *make no mistake*, your gifts do not go unnoticed. 🌟

✚ ☯️ ❤️ ♀

Thank you- Balchak

Susan Leonard-Balchak, MSeD, TOR
sleonard-balchak@hammondacademy.org
ext. 140; Special Education Services



Hammond Academy of Science & Technology

33 Muenich Ct. Hammond, IN 46320

P: (219)852-0500 F: (219)852-4153

Administration

Dr. Deborah Snedden, Ed.D.
Superintendent/School Leader

Jeffrey Wood, Ed. S.
Asst. Superintendent/Principal

To: HAST Board of Directors
From: Dr. Deb Snedden, Superintendent
Date: February 19, 2026

Subject: Request for Approval – Teacher Appreciation Stipend Funding

Dear Board Members,

I am respectfully requesting approval to allocate additional funds to support staff members who were eligible for the Indiana Department of Education Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) but were unable to receive funding due to limited state allocations.

As you know, HAST received a total TAG award of **\$21,537.84**. Based on the state's funding parameters and required tier structure, we were able to award grants to **five teachers**, with award amounts varying by eligibility tier between **\$3,500 and \$5,000**. Because demand exceeded the funds available, awards were distributed through a lottery process among qualified staff members within eligible tiers.

Unfortunately, **seven eligible teachers** were not selected through the lottery process. To recognize their continued commitment and contributions to our students and school community, I am requesting approval to provide a **\$500 stipend** to each of these seven teachers, totaling **\$3,500**.

Additionally, under the state allocation, one teacher who qualified for a full \$5,000 award would receive only a **partial amount of \$3,037.84** due to the final grant balance. To ensure equitable treatment aligned with the original eligibility structure, I am requesting approval to provide the remaining **\$1,962.16** from an alternative funding source so that this teacher receives the full qualified award.

Total requested amount from non-TAG funds:

- Stipends for seven teachers: **\$3,500.00**
 - Completion of partial TAG award: **\$1,962.16**
- Total: \$5,462.16**

This request reflects our commitment to recognizing staff contributions fairly while maintaining morale and reinforcing the values of appreciation and equity within our organization.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your continued support of our staff and students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deborah Snedden
Superintendent
Hammond Academy of Science and Technology



Hammond Academy
of Science & Technology

HAST Board of Directors Fund Request for Funding

The purpose of this form is to ensure that fund requests are aligned with our mission to support and benefit HAST students and the school administration community. All funding requests are subject to review and approval by the Board of Directors.

Please Note: Requests must be made 30 days in advance unless given permission to request emergency funds from the HAST Board President or HAST Superintendent. Funds requested must be used in accordance with fund rules and policies.

Date: 3/3/26

Requestor's Name: Alec Schassburger

Email: aschassburger

Phone: 219-501-6569

• Full Funding Request

• Reimbursement Request
• Match Funding Request

Amount Requested: \$995.00

Date Needed: 3/28/26

Funds to be used for Gift/Event/Education Details: The funds would be
used to pay for a bus transporting both HAST
science olympiad teams to Northridge Highschool
in Middlebury IN for their state competition.

- Approved
- Denied

Authorized Officer

Date: _____



THE FUTURE OF K-12 ACCOUNTABILITY: VALUING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, & EXPERIENCES

Indiana's proposed accountability model elevates academic outcomes and skill development, including communication, collaboration, and work ethic. Stakeholders have helped to identify multiple ways that students can demonstrate success, including test scores, as well as skills and experiences. The model prioritizes reading and math fundamentals, as well as opportunities for skill development, such as work-based learning and earning credentials of value in high school. This approach encourages schools to focus on improvement for all students, at all levels of proficiency, and ensures that students' unique knowledge, skills, and experiences are transparently reflected in a school's accountability grade.

The Essential Building Blocks: Literacy & Math

K - Grade 3

Academic Mastery

ILEARN Proficiency

- ELA
- Math



Additional Knowledge, Skills, & Experiences Include:

- Reading Proficiency (IREAD)
- Accelerated Literacy (based on IREAD)
- Regular School Attendance
- Meeting English-Language Proficiency Goal (WIDA; EL students only)

Foundational Knowledge & Skill Development

Grades 4-8

GRADES 4 THROUGH 6

Academic Mastery

ILEARN Proficiency

- ELA
- Math



Additional Knowledge, Skills, & Experiences Include:

- Adolescent Reading Proficiency (IREAD)
- Proficiency in Science (ILEARN)
- Proficiency in Social Studies (ILEARN)
- Meeting English-Language Proficiency Goal (WIDA; EL students only)
- Regular School Attendance
- One Year of Academic Progress (based on ILEARN)
- Acceleration in Academic Progress (More than One Year of Academic Progress; based on ILEARN)
- Excellence in Academic Progress (Growth to Proficiency; based on ILEARN)

GRADES 7 THROUGH 8

Academic Mastery

ILEARN Proficiency

- ELA
- Math



Additional Knowledge, Skills, & Experiences Include:

- One Year of Academic Progress (based on ILEARN)
- Acceleration in Academic Progress (More than One Year of Academic Progress; based on ILEARN)
- Excellence in Academic Progress (Growth to Proficiency; based on ILEARN)
- Regular School Attendance
- Completing a Graduation Plan (grade 7)
- High School-Level Coursework/Credit (calculated in grade 8)
- Meeting English-Language Proficiency Goal (WIDA; EL students only)



THE FUTURE OF K-12 ACCOUNTABILITY: VALUING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, & EXPERIENCES CONTINUED

Indiana's proposed accountability model elevates academic outcomes and skill development, including communication, collaboration, and work ethic. Stakeholders have helped to identify multiple ways that students can demonstrate success, including test scores, as well as skills and experiences. The model prioritizes reading and math fundamentals, as well as opportunities for skill development, such as work-based learning and earning credentials of value in high school. This approach encourages schools to focus on improvement for all students, at all levels of proficiency, and ensures that students' unique knowledge, skills, and experiences are transparently reflected in a school's accountability grade.

Knowledge & Skill Development + Career Engagement

Grades 9-10

Academic Mastery

9th Grade On Track

- 10+ High School Credits, to include...
 - 2 in Mathematics
 - 2 in English
 - 2 in Science, Social Studies, or Foreign Language



Additional Knowledge, Skills, & Experiences Include:

- College & Career Coursework (AP, IB, Cambridge, CTE, dual credit)
- CTE Coursework (3 total courses, with one being an advanced course)
- Proficiency on ILEARN Biology ECA
- Meet Benchmark on PSAT
- Regular School Attendance
- Meeting English-Language Proficiency Goal (WIDA; EL students only)

Knowledge & Skill Development + Credentials & Experiences

Grades 11-12

80-10-10 Calculation

NOTE: The key outcomes and additional knowledge, skills, and experiences listed below will make up **80% of a school's grade 12 letter grade**. In alignment with federal accountability requirements, the remaining 20% will be calculated based on:

- a school's **graduation rate** (10%) and
- the percentage of students achieving **proficiency on the SAT** Reading and Writing and Math (10%). Schools with 60% or more students reaching proficiency on SAT will receive 100 points each for Reading and Writing and Math.

Key Outcome

Indiana Diploma

- Diploma Only
- Honors Seal
- Honors Plus Seal



Additional Knowledge, Skills, & Experiences Include:

- Work-Based Learning
- Credential of Value
- College & Career Coursework (AP, IB, Cambridge, CTE, dual credit)
- Proficiency on ILEARN U.S. Government ECA
- Regular School Attendance
- Proficiency on ILEARN Biology ECA
- Meet English Benchmark on the ACT or CLT
- Meet Mathematics Benchmark on the ACT or CLT
- Meeting English-Language Proficiency Goal (WIDA; EL students only)

Celebrating Our Teacher of the Year! Alyssa Medina

Hammond Academy of Science and Technology's Teacher of the Year

We are thrilled to recognize Alyssa Medina for her outstanding dedication to students and leadership within the HAST community.

Alyssa's Highlights:

- **Role:** 7th-grade English Language Arts Teacher and Team Leader.
- **Impact:** Brings energy and passion to her teaching, motivating others and turning great ideas into meaningful learning experiences.
- **Commitment:** Dedicated to continuous improvement, reflecting a strong growth mindset.
- **Inspiration:** Strives to be a source of encouragement and opportunity for her students, inspired by the teachers who shaped her own love of learning.
- **Education:** Began her career through Teach For America and earned her Master's in Education from Relay Graduate School in 2023.

When she's not teaching, Alyssa enjoys quality time with her fiancé and their daughter, Dakota.

Thank you, Alyssa, for your commitment



HAST Summer School Program 2026

Purpose

HAST will implement a **Summer School Credit Recovery Program** to support students in earning required credits toward graduation while improving outcomes aligned to Indiana's **A–F accountability model**.

Program Details

- **Dates:** June 1 – July 3 (Monday–Friday)
- **Location:** HAST
- **Grades:** 9–12

Program Focus

- Core academic courses: **ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies**
- **Credit recovery** for failed courses
- **Graduation support**, especially for seniors and at-risk students
- Delivered through **PLATO Credit Recovery Lab** (individualized pacing with teacher support)

Student Enrollment Priorities

1. Seniors needing credits for graduation
2. Students who failed core courses
3. Students identified as academically at-risk

Staffing

- 2 certified teachers
- 2 instructional aides
- Minimum of 15 students per section

Staff Selection Based On:

- Licensure/certification
- Current teaching assignment
- Prior summer school experience

Compensation

- Certified staff: \$40/hour
- Instructional aides: hourly rate

Funding Considerations

This program aligns with **IDOE summer school priorities**. Final course offerings and program size are **contingent upon state funding allocations under the new per-student funding model**.