

**Hmong College Prep Academy
Parent Meeting
Questions + Answers**

Q: Is Hmong College Prep Academy a strong school?

- HCPA's mission is to provide the best integrated, challenging and well-rounded educational experience to students in grades K-12.
- Our most recent review from Bethel University found that HCPA is meeting that mission with test scores that are above district average and graduation rates that are above state average. However, Bethel also found we needed to make improvements around how the school is managed. We are taking all the steps necessary to strengthen our school operations.
- HCPA is a strong school community where families, students, teachers and staff care deeply about the success of every student. Together we are all making HCPA a place where our children can grow and reach their full potential.

Q: Explain what happened with HCPA to require a corrective action from Bethel University and inquiries from state agencies?

- As a public charter school, we are reviewed every year by our authorizer, Bethel University. Bethel reviews four major areas: academic and educational program; fiscal management – budget and finances; governance and leadership; and, operations and legal compliance. Bethel's annual review found Hmong College Prep Academy's academics and mission to be strong, but our governance and management needs to be stronger.
- The corrective action plan from Bethel was specifically related to a required school audit and an investment made with the Woodstock hedge fund. This investment was not in compliance with school policy or rules that govern public school investments. The full scope of the investment is still under investigation by state agencies. The HCPA board is also managing an independent investigation into the investment and that work is ongoing. HCPA has also pursued a lawsuit against Woodstock and we continue to work with our attorneys to get a resolution.
- Today our board and school leaders are working daily to implement all the changes required in Bethel's corrective action plan. We are in regular communication with Bethel and believe we will come out of this situation an even stronger school.

Q: How will new school leadership prevent an issue like this from happening again?

- The board at HCPA is committed to safeguarding the future of our school and put into place the checks and balances needed to create strong governance and school oversight.
- HCPA's work with Bethel and charter school experts from CharterSource includes creating and activating a new leadership structure, implementing new policies and procedures around management of the school's finances including hiring a highly qualified Chief Financial Officer. All of these actions help to prevent an issue like this one from happening again.

Q: Can you share what exactly happened with the process to make the investment and who is responsible?

- Right now, the board, our regulators and Bethel are still reporting and investigating the specifics around what happened. Because of pending legal issues and investigations, we are not able to discuss it right now. However, the board will share more when the work is complete.

Q: Explain the new leadership at HCPA

Board or Directors

HCPA is led by a board of directors that includes community members, parents and teachers.

The current board includes:

Christy Vongvang, Board Chair

Richard Perry, Vice Chair

Fue Vue, Treasurer

Mee Vang, Secretary

Crystal Robideau, Teacher Member

School Leader

Following the resignation of Dr. Hang, the board appointed Ms. Danijela Duvnjak (Ms. D) as Interim Chief Academic Officer. Ms. D was involved in helping to start HCPA in the early years.

She has worked as the leader of HCPA's 6-12 teaching and learning and is very committed to the success of the school. Ms. D reports to the board.

Financial Leader

The board is currently hiring a new Chief Financial Officer to lead and manage the school's finances along with our accounting firm. This role will report to the board.

Governance Committee and Finance Committee

HCPA also has two important committees who help work on behalf of the school in the areas of governance and finance. The committees are made up of members of the board, staff and volunteers. The committees present their work to the board and report to the board.

Parent Advisory Committee

HCPA is currently forming a Parent Advisory Committee. This group of HCPA parent leaders will work on a variety of things important to our school community and communicate to the board and families.

Q: Will Dr. Hang continue to be involved at HCPA?

Dr. Hang has resigned her position at HCPA and stated it was for the best interest of the school. We respect Dr. Hang's role as our founder. Going forward Dr. Hang will not be involved at HCPA.

Q: Did Mr. Yang also leave HCPA?

Yes, Mr. Yang has resigned from HCPA. We respect both Dr. Hang and Mr. Yang's roles as the school's founders. Mr. Yang worked with the board to ensure a smooth transition of his role.

Q: Will the mission and the special community we've created at HCPA change with new leadership?

The people leading HCPA right now have a long history and connection to our school. The board and parent advisory committee will specifically be focused on our school's mission and our focus on providing an excellent education. The mission and community at HCPA is not changing. Our leaders, teachers, parents and students understand what a special school community we have together. We are focused on being the best school community for our students and our families.

What are plans for more innovation at HCPA?

(Christy or Ms. D --- can you address this question?)

Robotics Team:

After a hiatus during COVID, HCPA will resume the high school Robotics program. This is an innovative program that offers students an opportunity to build leadership and expertise in the areas of engineering, coding and business. Through planning and local competitions, students also gain experience with electrical concepts, pneumatics, tooling, design, carpentry, safety, drivers (gamers), community outreach, fundraising, marketing, accounting, graphic design, and architecture. HCPA coaches and community mentors support our students throughout the process.

Structured Literacy:

Through a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education, an innovative professional development program that our elementary teachers and secondary ELL & SpEd teachers participate in is LETRS®: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling. LETRS® provides teachers with the skills they need to master the fundamentals of reading instruction and it is based on several years of solid research. In the Twin Cities, it is typically private schools that offer this type of literacy program, and HCPA is proud to bring this knowledge of language and literacy to its students.

Q: How is the school expansion going and will we address other areas of needed improvement like the playground?

The middle school project is on track and scheduled to open for students on time. We have heard feedback about interest other improvements at the school including the playground. The school board will review those suggestions.

Q: Can the school improve how it communications to parents and also make the website easier to navigate?

To create strong communication this school year, the board has held several parent meetings both in person and online. We also invite all families to attend board meetings if they are interested in learning more about how the school leadership is working. The board meeting times and agendas are posted on the HCPA website.

We are also reviewing additional ways we can communicate with parents to make sure you are aware of all the events, activities and news from the school.

Q: What is happening with COVID-19, masks and learning at the school?

HCPA's top priority is creating a safe in-person learning environment for all students in K-12. To avoid distance learning and create a consistent school learning plan, we are requiring masks at school. This is in line with other school districts who are also focused on safe in-person learning for the school year.

As COVID-19 evolves we will continually evaluate the safety measures we take at school.

We are allowing some parent volunteers at the school. Right now, we are looking for lunchtime volunteers and a few other opportunities. Contact the school office to learn more.