Neighborhood Charter Schools

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees**

July 29, 2020

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on July 29, 2020 via video and phone conference. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

**Trustees Present**:

Gail Brousal

Derek Fleming

Brian Hamilton

Jefferson Hughes

Everardo Jefferson

Justena Kavanagh

Jennifer Lindsay (pending SED approval)

Samantha Ramos

Walter Rendon

Cliff Schneider

Patricia Soussloff

**Trustees Absent**:

Arthur Sadoff

**Others in Attendance:**

Analiza Wolf

Sarah Iannucci

Nick Carton

Claire Henderson

Dr. Morgan Jenkins

Victor Rios

Jennifer Buck

Lauren Carey

Loretta Kleinberg

Ariel Ortiz

*Ten of the eleven seated Trustees were in attendance in person and present throughout the meeting, which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business at the meeting.*

1. **Welcome and Public Comment.**

Ms. Soussloff began the meeting by welcoming everyone. Ms. Soussloff invited public comments and none were received.

1. **Approval of June 2020 Minutes.**

A motion was made by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to approve the June 2020 Board meeting minutes and was unanimously approved.

1. **Executive Director’s Report, Part I- Connection to the Mission.**

Ms. Wolf began by thanking NCS teachers and leaders who planned events for Juneteenth and a video was played showing how NCS families observed Juneteenth celebrations. Ms. Wolf then led the Trustees and others present through a reading of the NCS Vision and reflection on the 2019-20 school year. Instructions wins- including the fast pivot to remote learning- were reviewed. Of note, 85% of families were satisfied with the support received during remote learning. On the operations side, there were a number of wins, too, focused on shutting down facilities and moving to full remote learning, providing each scholar with technology for remote learning, improving operational systems and maintaining bonuses for staff and salary increases despite the New York State funding challenges due to the Pandemic. Organization-wise, there is a lot to celebrate related to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives, which is a priority of NCS.

It is also a priority to have a strong remote learning program going forward, and NCS’s plan is to run a remote learning only model through Winter Break given all of the considerations for staff and families, this is the best decision. Ms. Iannucci presented details on plans for remote learning, which include more live teaching and flexible scheduling time for one-to-one and small-group instruction for scholars who need extra support. A discussion ensued. Details were shared on the NCS Family Portal and a discussion ensued.

**A motion was made by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Ms. Brousal to provide remote instruction through December 2020 and the motion was unanimously approved.**

Details regarding enrollment were provided at both the Harlem and Bronx campus and a discussion ensued.

1. **Finance Update**

Ms. Wolf announced that Michelle Rumph (formerly of Heketi Charter School) has been hired as Director of Finance. Ms. Wolf presented on some unanticipated costs since the budget was approved connected to real estate taxes, PPE costs, hiring a technology associate for remote learning and some painting at Harlem. Some of these expenses may be off-set by cost savings on outsourced financial services, supplies and the elimination of the in-person after-school program given remote learning. A discussion ensued regarding the status of the tax abatement process and potential considerations regarding same looking forward given NYC fiscal challenges. Ms. Wolf also presented on financial stability given flat Per Pupil Funding and needs going forward considering what could be ongoing technology needs with remote learning and how NCS continues to manage its programming with fidelity to the Schools’ charters.

**Mr. Schneider moved and Mr. Jefferson seconded a motion to approve changes to the Employee Handbook and was unanimously approved.**

1. **Presentation on Strategic Action Plan on DEI.**

Ms. Jenkins began her presentation by discussing the origin of the Committee on DEI and the process and work that has taken place since the fall of 2019., including a call to action, formation of the Committee and process for seating folks on the committee going forward (including a scholar and parent). Currently, the Committee is comprised of 13 members and will ultimately be 15. Ms. Jenkins then presented on the Committee training process, the use of focus groups to collect data and how the data was analyzed and the development of a Strategic Action Plan. 2020-21 school year action items were presented along with the working teams that have contributed to the plan and a timeline of next steps before the commencement of the 2020-21 school year. A discussion ensued.

1. **Addition to Trustees to the Board.**

Ms. Soussloff led a discussion regarding prioritizing folks from the school communities to add trustees to the Board that reflect the community and given the two new vacancies on the Board with the departure of Mr. Popper and Mr. Rashid, this is a great opportunity to do so. Ms. Soussloff noted that the Governance Committee spoke about Wylie Fennel- currently on the FONCS Board and with a child in 9th grade on the Autism spectrum and connected to NCS since its founding would be a great candidate. The second individual who the Governance Committee would like to consider for a Trustee is Dan Diaz from Eastside Settlement House, previously up for consideration but was unable to be considered due to work obligations at the time.

**A motion was made by G. Brousal and seconded by Mr. Schneider to elect Mr. Fennel to the Board, subject to NYSED approval and the motion was unanimously approved subject to background check and fulfillment of other SED requirements for charter school trustees.**

1. **Board Self- Evaluation.**

Ms. Soussloff thanked the Board for completing the Self-Evaluation form and early results reflect that Trustees would like additional time to dive into certain matters to strategic planning around real estate (does NCS acquire the ground lease at the Bronx facility) as well as the topic of high school (potentially joining the Vertex Academy program). With respect to high school, the plan is for Ms. Soussloff, Ms. Wolf and Ms. Iannucci to meet with the Vertex team to further the discussion and the Board agreed to setting up an additional strategic planning meeting of the Board to discuss plans for a high school.

1. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Schneider moved to adjourn and Mr. Hughes seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting which was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cliff Schneider, Secretary

I, Cliff Schneider, the duly qualified Secretary of Neighborhood Charter Schools, a New York education corporation, do hereby certify that I prepared these Minutes, and that the above is a true and complete copy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the said corporation held on July 29, 2020.

Dated: August 26, 2020