

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
September 27, 2023

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on September 27, 2023, via video. The meeting was called to order at 6:09 PM.

Trustees Present:

Heidi Baker
Wylie Fennell
Stephanie Hubbell
Everardo Jefferson
Justena Kavanagh
Walter Rendon
Cliff Schneider
Patricia Soussloff

Trustees Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Rumph
Michelle Santos

All eight (8) seated Trustees were in attendance by video 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 and invited public comments. No comments were received.

2. Future Board Meeting Logistics

Ms. Santos reminded the Board that on May 3, 2023 Governor Kathy Hochul signed into law an amendment to the Open Meetings Law to make permanent (until July 1, 2024) the expanded use of videoconferencing by public bodies to conduct open meetings, under extraordinary circumstances, regardless of a declaration of emergency. In order to comply with the amendment, a public body that wishes to allow for remote attendance by its members at locations that do not allow for in-person physical attendance by the public is required to adopt a resolution authorizing such remote attendance. Two options were presented to Board members: (1) to hold in person meetings with the option for attendance by videoconference, which would involve publishing the physical address of the location from which each member is attending by videoconference in advance of the meeting for purposes of quorum, or (2) resume attendance in person only. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Mr. Jefferson to hold in person meetings with the option for attendance by videoconference with the requirement or publishing the physical address of the location from which each member is attending by videoconference in advance of the meeting for purposes of quorum and was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Mr. Rendon to approve the minutes from the August 30, 2023 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

4. President's Report

Ms. Soussloff advised that she is working with Stephanie Fox, a former teacher and Grade Team Leader at the Bronx campus, to have her submit her application to join the Board as discussed at the last meeting. Ms. Fox is currently involved in nonprofit work in which she created a community outreach program and built and maintained partnerships with community-based organizations, businesses and elected officials.

Mr. Schneider mentioned that he is acquainted with a retail banker who is seeking Board involvement and will contact him to discuss the opportunity to join the NCS Board of Trustees.

5. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick reported that the test scores for the Spring 2023 New York State Exams have been released, however they are officially embargoed by the State Education Department and cannot be shared with the public, including Board members. In general, NCS scores in the Math exam were stronger than those in the ELA exam, which is not where NCS would like them to be.

-- Focus on ELA and Co-Teaching: Mr. McCormick stated that he will be spending tomorrow with the Director of ELA reviewing the curriculum and identifying areas for improvement in the ICT co-teaching model so that students receive more targeted instruction and individualized learning.

-- Attendance and Enrollment Updates: Enrollment is currently lower than projections, as of Friday NCS is 20 students short of its target of 1,020. The Operations teams are working on enrolling more students. NCS is checking to make sure that all students with services are coded correctly.

-- Formal Evaluation System: NCS is rolling out The Danielson Rubric as a formal evaluation system to assess teacher performance. Mr. McCormick will be providing job-embedded professional learning to all school leaders, visiting classrooms each week to norm the observation lens and provide useful feedback and support for teacher growth.

-- Improving Systems to Support Students and Families: Mr. McCormick provided training last week to leaders on Child Abuse and Maltreatment Prevention, Suicide Prevention, and Student to Student Sexual Harassment. NCS will be designating point persons in each school who will receive more intensive training next week so they can support staff. He attended the weekly Mental Health Committee in the Bronx in which several staff members meet to discuss students and families in crisis and ways they can be supported by NCS. This type of meeting takes place in each school on a regular basis.

-- Equitable and Competitive Compensation: Mr. McCormick reported that recently NCS lost 2 to 3 staff members due to better offers and that he met with HR today to work on transparency and equity and developing a salary schedule that is competitive to other schools and networks.

-- Social Media: Mr. McCormick informed the Board that Ms. Santos has been working to increase the NCS social media presence to attract more followers and attention and is also revamping different sections of the school's website to tell the NCS story to prospective students, families and employment candidates.

-- Principal Reports: Mr. McCormick requested for principals to provide updates on celebrations and successes to be included in his monthly report to the Board. A notable event that took place was the field trip that students in the Harlem middle school took to Central Library in Brooklyn to view their tribute in honor of Jay-Z and his lyricism.

-- Operations Update: NCS Operations is working to increase enrollment by contacting prospective families, improving school safety and improving family communication with the potential use of the Parent Square program. They are also increasing parent resources by scheduling the on-site dental services program, applying to participate in a coat drive, and has submitting an application to the Cool Culture program for Kindergarten families to access over 90 participating museums, gardens, historical societies, science centers and zoos for up to five people for one year.

6. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon reported that the auditors are in the last stage of reviewing FY 22-23 and that they will give a presentation in October on their findings. There are no outstanding issues. NCS is projected to end the year \$110,000 higher in net cash pending updated student enrollment numbers. The finance report was completed earlier this month because of the Yom Kippur holiday.

In terms of real estate, there is still a space management issue in Harlem. Currently NCS is renting space on a month-to-month basis at Harlem Collective for the members of the Network to have private meeting spaces. There are also considerations on space in the Bronx as it grows from K-5 to K-8. A Real Estate Committee will be formed to explore these issues.

7. Charter Renewal

As part of the renewal process for the Bronx Charter there will be a visit by the State Education Department as authorizer on October 23rd and 24th. In preparation, NCS will submit benchmarks on student performance by October 1st.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Schneider made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Kavanagh, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Baker

I, Heidi Baker, the duly qualified Secretary of Neighborhood Charter Schools, a New York education corporation, do hereby certify that I reviewed 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 September 27, 2023.

Dated: September 27, 2023