

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 31, 2024

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on January 31, 2024, at 411 Wales Avenue, Bronx, New York 10454, and via video. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

Trustees Present:

Heidi Baker
Wylie Fennell (via video)
Stephanie Fox
Stephanie Hubbell (via video)
Everardo Jefferson (via video)
Justena Kavanagh
Walter Rendon
Cliff Schneider (via video)

Trustees Absent:

Patricia Soussloff

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Rumph
Michelle Santos
Jermaine Ottey

Four (4) out of nine (9) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and four (4) out of nine (9) seated Trustees were in attendance via videoconference. All in attendance by video fulfilled the requirement of publishing their physical addresses of the location from which they were attending in advance of the meeting. All eight (8) seated Trustees were present throughout the meeting, which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business at the meeting.

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Mr. Schneider began the meeting and invited public comments. No comments were received.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Mr. Rendon to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2023 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

4. President’s Report

On behalf of Ms. Soussloff, Ms. Santos reminded the Board that donations are appreciated and accepted throughout the year.

Ms. Kavanagh provided an update on the annual fundraiser and informed the Board that \$43,000 was raised as of the end of 2023.

4. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Santos to provide an update on Operations. Ms. Santos announced that NCS has received over 300 applications so far for SY 2024-2025. NCS is working to increase applications at the Bronx campus with the CKC Collaborative, a free program sponsored by the NY Charter Schools Association that provides families with information about charter schools community organizations. She also reported that the Simulation Test that Scholars took as a short practice for the state exam went well. Scholars were able to enter all information in the portal and navigate through the system, with troubleshooting taking place in the moment.

Mr. McCormick reported that NCS will soon finalize a transparent teacher salary schedule that will be announced for the next two school years. This will allow teachers to know their salary for the next 24 months and plan accordingly. It will be higher than the NYCDOE and competitive with other charter schools. He also stated that he is finalizing a leadership restructuring for SY 2024-2025 that will streamline operations, cut positions and costs, and provide a clearer line of authority and accountability.

In terms of evaluations, Mr. McCormick stated that he completed the Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model with all principals. Everyone below them in a leadership and non-teacher position will be evaluated next with their own rubrics, and the information on their observations, feedback and ratings will be captured in TeacherBoost Pro, an online platform that was purchased to house all evaluation.

The SY 2024-2025 calendar will be released to all families before the February break. It will be closely aligned to the NYCDOE calendar and to New York state laws on new holidays and will consist of 185 days of instruction as required by the charter.

Mr. McCormick informed the Board that NCS is moving along with Mt. Zion. NCS has received a quote for the construction work that is needed, and Ms. Santos will meet with the architects to discuss the project. The realtor is working with Mt. Zion to get a term sheet that will lead to negotiations.

NCS has officially launched the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee for SY 2023-2024. They are working on various initiatives including a clothing drive, a parent survey, and a staff survey to promote community outreach and support and identify concerns, areas of improvement and tailor future supports for families and staff. Other projects are also in the works to promote a safe space for Scholars, families and staff members.

Lastly, Mr. McCormick reviewed the January data on attendance, enrollment, behavior and ELA and Math assessment data (F&P and iReady). Enrollment is down 24 students across the network from the budget target 1020 and the rate of attendance is 92.55%. Currently F&P passing rate is 50.8-58.8%. The iReady middle of year assessments show growth of 15-22 pp in ELA and 17-21 pp in Math from the beginning of year assessment data.

5. Talent and Human Resources Presentation

Mr. Ottey, Senior Director of Talent and Human Resources, presented on the 2024-2025 staff recruitment strategy. He discussed the benefits of joining NCS, including a referral bonus for current employees, relocation stipends for new hires who live more than 50 miles away from their campus, sign on bonuses for positions that are difficult to fill, a revamped and transparent salary schedule, transparent evaluations, updated PTO policies and free medical insurance for employees and their dependents after 5 years of employment at NCS. He also provided insight into the target candidate profile, the hiring process starting with intent to return emails on February 26th and offer letters in mid-March, and the pipelines being used to find potential new hires.

6. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon stated that NCS is projected to end the year \$300,000 net positive balanced budget despite lower enrollment. This is due to savings from not hiring open positions. NCS currently has 4.1 months of cash on hand. He informed the Board that the Federal grants that NCS received due to the COVID pandemic are coming to an end and provided an overview of the 2024-2025 budget timeline. Finally, he provided an overview of the upcoming considerations for lease assistance and lease (bond) take over from Civic for the Bronx campus.

7. Executive Session

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Kavanagh to enter into executive session to discuss a confidential personnel matter and was unanimously approved. No votes were taken during the session. A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Ms. Kavanagh to exit executive session and was unanimously approved.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Kavanagh made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Rendon, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 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 January 31, 2024.

Dated: January 31, 2024