

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
February 28, 2024

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on February 28, 2024, at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York 10030, 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
Everardo Jefferson (via video)
Justena Kavanagh (via video)
Walter Rendon (via video)
Cliff Schneider (via video)
Patricia Soussloff

Trustees Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Rumph
Michelle Santos
Kara Singleton
Romina Cepeda
Yolanda Dekine
Alison Rosnick

Four (4) out of nine (9) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and five (5) 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 nine (9) seated Trustees were 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. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Ms. Hubbell to approve the minutes from the January 31, 2024 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

3. President’s Report

Ms. Soussloff announced to the Board that there is an update on space for the Harlem campus that will be provided by Mr. McCormick during his report.

4. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Santos to provide an update from Operations. Ms. Santos informed the Board that NCS has received over 400 applications so far for SY 2024-2025. The Operations team continues to attend school fairs, run tours for prospective families and send out information to community organizations. The lottery for open seats will be held on April 4, 2024. She advised that a video was recorded and shared via social media and on the school's website that focuses on our students and how they feel about NCS and that a Virtual360 tour of each campus will be created to provide families with an opportunity to experience both schools online. In addition, she discussed the implementation of the ParentSquare app, a central portal based on the social media experience that will allow Operations to streamline communication and increase engagement between NCS and families. Finally, Ms. Santos shared that an application was submitted for NCS to participate in the Operation Warm program and as a result the Bronx campus received 10 boxes filled with brand new coats to be distributed to students.

Mr. McCormick announced that Mt. Zion will not be a viable option for NCS as additional space for the Harlem campus. The revised architectural drawings for work needed to bring the building in compliance with city laws and regulations reduced the amount of space for use by NCS. There are also major issues with water leaks across the building that have led to collapsed infrastructure and black mold. NCS is working to identify other possible locations for additional instructional space.

Other updates provided by Mr. McCormick included the potential appearance by NCS on the news program ViewPoint with Dennis Quaid in a segment highlighting organizations that are making a difference in the lives of autistic people and changing the terminology and language NCS uses in reference to Special Education to align with the Inclusive and Interdependent Language Initiative currently being rolled out by the NYC DOE. He also informed the Board that he will present his finalized plan to restructure the leadership teams at NCS at the March Board Meeting and provided details on the recent DEI Committee initiatives including the clothing drive and family and staff surveys.

Lastly, Mr. McCormick reviewed the February data on attendance, enrollment, behavior and middle of year Money Jar assessments. Enrollment is down 28 students across the network from the budget target 1020 and the rate of attendance is 92.49%. The middle of year Money Jar passing rate is 68.5% network wide.

5. New Instructional Salary Schedule

Former NCS Director of Human Resources Alison Rosnick discussed the instructional salary schedule that will be released to 10-month instructional staff tomorrow. It will provide separate salary scales for certified and uncertified teachers for SY 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 that are competitive with the NYC DOE and other charter schools. The new scales will become effective on August 1, 2024, and will be reflected in paychecks on August 15th. Bringing back performance-based bonuses as additional compensation is also being considered.

6. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon presented on the financial position and health of NCS. The budget for SY24 is settled and in the process of being finalized. Enrollment is lower than budgeted and has leveled off. NCS currently has 98 days/3.2 months of cash on hand.

7. Property Tax Abatement- Harlem Campus

Mr. Schneider provided an update on the application by NCS for a property tax abatement for the building located at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York, NY. The application was recently reviewed by the NYC Department of Finance however due to the time that has passed from its submission to the recording of the Condo declaration the current Lease no longer has a remaining term of at least 30 years from the date of the recording for approval. The property tax abatement would provide NCS with a substantial tax refund. Currently NCS has the rights to have returned the \$148,831 of the Security Deposit “burn down” which remains per the 4th Amendment to the Lease. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Baker that in consideration for Landlord’s agreement to extend the term of the lease for the building located at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York, NY to at least a 30-year term, NCS will forgo its rights to have returned the \$148,831 of the Security Deposit “burn down” remaining per the 4th Amendment to the Lease and was unanimously approved.

8. Executive Session

A motion was made by Ms. Hubbell and seconded by Ms. Baker 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. Hubbell and seconded by Ms. Kavanagh to exit executive session and was unanimously approved.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Hubbell made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Fox, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:54 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 February 28, 2024.

Dated: February 28, 2024