

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
December 20, 2023

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on December 20, 2023, at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York 10030, and via video. The meeting was called to order at 4:42 PM.

Trustees Present:

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

Trustees Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Rumph
Michelle Santos
Romina Cepeda
Alicia Etienne
Yolanda Dekine

Five (5) out of eight (8) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and present throughout the meeting, which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business at the meeting. Three (3) out of eight (8) seated Trustees were also in attendance via video and present throughout the meeting.

1. Welcome and Public Comment

Ms. Soussloff began the meeting and invited public comments. No comments were received.

2. President’s Report

Ms. Soussloff reminded the Board about the Annual Appeal and for the members to encourage gifts from their contacts for the growing NCS community.

3. Executive Director’s Report

Mr. McCormick announced that Michelle Rumph has been promoted to Managing Director of Finance. The Board congratulated Ms. Rumph on her new position.

Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Santos to provide updates from Operations. Ms. Santos informed the Board that enrollment for SY 2024-2025 opened on December 1, 2023. NCS has already received over 100 applications network-wide, 67 of those are for Kindergarten. NCS has booked school fairs in districts 6 and 7 and have shared information about the ASD program with schools in districts 3, 4, 5 and 8. For currently enrolled families the intent-to-return forms will be sent before the lottery takes place in April, with a second round sent before the school year ends and another during the summer to allow NCS to determine the number of open seat and to enroll new students accordingly.

With regards to Social Media, Ms. Santos stated that there is a “guide” feature on Instagram that NCS will be using to share resources for families with autistic children. The new NCS website was launched. A videographer visited the Harlem campus and recorded areas of the school, students and classes in action. The resulting video will be on the NCS homepage in January. In addition, NCS has paid for “clicks” on Google to increase school visibility when people search for specific words as part of the marketing strategy.

As to facilities, NCS will be enhancing the Harlem campus with color by adding accent walls on each floor with different designs and painting one hallway wall to make the school feel more welcoming to students.

Mr. McCormick informed the Board that Jermaine Ottey, Senior Director of Human Resources and Talent, will be attending the Board’s January meeting to discuss staff recruitment plans for the Spring.

Mr. McCormick reported on his efforts to increase transparency and communication regarding curriculum, assessments and grading for families. He has been working with the Curriculum teams to provide a preview of the upcoming month’s curriculum focus in each major area of content and an assessment calendar so that families are aware of when their students will be tested each month. In addition, starting in January teachers will send home graded assessments no more than two weeks after the day of the test for families to review, and the online grading program for Grades K-4 will be moved to Educate to provide families with a clear grading policy on how grades are calculated and allow them to see all grades in real time, as already happens with Grades 5-8. Curriculum Directors will meet with the Parent Association Presidents in January to discuss these positive changes and listen to feedback.

The new teacher evaluation system was rolled out in December. Every classroom teacher will receive at least two formal observations this school year, with newer and/or struggling teachers receiving more. In the second week of January the Marzano School Leader Evaluation Model will be used to evaluate the three school principals. By mid-February every instructional staff will have an evaluation rubric.

In terms of real estate, NCS is receiving updated quotes on the Mt. Zion renovation. A tour of the building on West 124th Street where NCS was once housed is being arranged through the agent. That building will be vacant as of the end of June 2024. Mt. Zion is the preferred location to house 7th and 8th Grades because it is in district 6.

Lastly, Mr. McCormick reviewed the December data on attendance, enrollment and behavior data. Enrollment is down 11 students across the network from the budget target 1020 and the rate of attendance is 93.21%.

4. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon presented on the financial position and health of NCS. The budget for SY24 is stable and we are starting to look at SY25, focusing on funding for out-of-school and after school experiences.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Hubbell to approve the minutes from the October 25, 2023 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Hubbell to approve the minutes from the November 29, 2023 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

5. 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 Mr. Schneider and seconded by Mr. Fennell to exit executive session and was unanimously approved.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Schneider made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Baker, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 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 December 20, 2023.

Dated: December 20, 2023