

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
September 25, 2024

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on September 25, 2024, at 411 Wales Avenue, Bronx, New York 10454, and via video. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 PM.

Trustees Present:

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

Trustees Absent:

Everardo Jefferson

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Santos
Michelle Rumph
Jenn Lindsay

Two (2) out of seven (7) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and four (4) out of seven (7) 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. Six (6) out of seven (7) 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 Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Baker to approve the minutes from the August 28, 2024 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

3. High School Planning Overview

Ms. Jennifer Lindsay, Consultant, presented on the proposed three-year plan to open a high school for NCS. NCS would be looking to open a single site high school with matriculating middle school students from both K-8 campuses receiving a guaranteed seat.

She informed the Board that with NYSED as the charter authorizer for NCS we do not have the ability to merge the Harlem and Bronx charters to open a high school, instead NCS needs to apply to expand both charters. In order to start accepting students for SY 27-28 the applications to expand both charters would need to be submitted by December 2025. There are operational implications that would include the management of data since separate accounting would be required under each charter.

Ms. Lindsay set forth a three-year high level planning overview with priorities for SY 24-25, 25-26 and 26-27 and proposed key dates for submitting the charter expansion applications, beginning of permanent location identification, pre-construction/design and construction, and hire dates for the Principal and Director of Operations positions. She pointed out that the facilities dates are tied to the approval date(s) of the charter expansions and that NCS would look for temporary incubation location for 1-2 years in July 2026. NCS would consult with Civic Builders in SY 25-26 to identify a location for the high school and begin lease negotiations. As to the planning process, Ms. Lindsay identified the groups of people that will be involved and their engagement and responsibilities, starting with a core planning team, the leadership team, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director and the students, families and other staff that will be engaged at key points to ensure that the High School program and its operations are informed by their input. She also discussed the cost for the planning stage, upfront input needed from Board members to inform the vision for the high school by generating a list of components for the program, and the financial analysis that will take place in light of the proposed buyout of the Bronx building and ground lease interest from Civic Builders.

4. Vice President's Report

Mr. Schneider reminded the Board to complete the survey from Edgility regarding the evaluation rubric for the Executive Director position.

5. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick invited Ms. Santos to provide updates from Operations. Ms. Santos discussed continuing to engage with Univision to create material to increase outreach to Spanish speaking families for enrollment for SY 25-26. She suggested that Lulu Gomez from Univision could film an interview with an NCS parent or student that would be linked in the school social media for this purpose. Parent engagement is going well this year with the Parent Associations planning parent mixers, engaging volunteers and organizing events such as uniform drives. Finally, she requested to move up the time of the Board of Trustees meeting for October and December to 5:00 pm instead of 6:00 pm due to school events including the NCS Holiday Party in December.

Mr. McCormick highlighted the Principal celebrations that he included in his written report to the Board. School has been in session for one month and routines and protocols are in place, with the Harlem campus under one leadership. Earlier today a professional development session took place for NCS leaders with a program from Insights that involved a survey and sessions for all to learn who they are as leaders. Leaders will continue to engage in professional development every month during the school year.

Mr. McCormick stated that he and Ms. Santos obtained training from the NY Charter Center to engage with elected officials. This included an overview of the elected officials representing the geographic districts in Harlem and Bronx. They plan to reach out to arrange meet and greets with as many officials as possible.

As to the Multilingual Learners program, Mr. McCormick announced that NCS is almost in compliance. Pointing to the report of Martha Vega, Director of Multilingual Learning, he noted that the majority of eligible students are currently receiving support.

Mr. McCormick discussed upcoming professional development opportunities for Nadia Brown, the head of the DEI Committee to attend the National Summit for Courageous Conversation in Chicago in October and for the Curriculum Directors to attend the National Convention for Teachers in ELA in Boston in November. Enrollment for SY 24-25 is still being ironed out with NCS close to or at projections with numbers that are consistent and stable.

6. Executive Session

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

7. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon informed the Board that the audit for the FY 24 is 95% complete, with the official presentation to the Finance Committee by Michelle Cain from MMB & Co. in October. NCS expects to have clear enrollment numbers by mid-October as well as firmed up staffing in comparison to the projections in the budget for FY 25. Additionally, NCS will be looking into the buyout of the building at 411 Wales Avenue and ground lease from Civic Builders as we are approaching the deadline to exercising our option with Civic.

8. Nominating and Governance Update

Ms. Hubbell provided an update on the meeting held with Board of Trustees candidate, Dr. Morgan Jenkins. A further discussion of contacting Aaron Listhaus to discuss his interest in joining the Board ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Baker to nominate Dr. Morgan Jenkins for a position on the NCS Board of Trustees subject to approval by the New York State Education Department and was unanimously approved.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Baker made a motion which was seconded by Ms. Hubbell, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 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 25, 2024.

Dated: September 25, 2024