

Neighborhood Charter Schools  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees**  
December 18, 2024

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on December 18, 2024, at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York 10030, and via video. The meeting was called to order at 5:03 PM.

**Trustees Present:**

Heidi Baker  
Wylie Fennell (via video)  
Stephanie Hubbell (via video)  
Morgan Jenkins  
Cliff Schneider

**Trustees Absent:**

Everardo Jefferson  
Walter Rendon  
Patricia Soussloff

**Others in Attendance:**

Daniel McCormick  
Michelle Rumph  
Michelle Santos  
Rachel Viegas  
Monique Granados

Three (3) out of eight (8) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and two (2) out of eight (8) 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. Five (5) out of 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. NCS Operations Update**

Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Santos to provide an update from Operations. Ms. Santos informed the Board that enrollment for SY 2025-2026 is ongoing. School tours will begin in January, allowing prospective families to visit classrooms and ask questions from the principals, Directors of Operations and a member of the Special Education team.

The Operations team has taken part in multiple school fairs so far including the annual Sugar Hill Preschool Fair, JCC Special Education Fair and the ABC Graham School Fair and will continue to visit local preschools. The Parent Ambassador program has also been implemented at both campuses with current families volunteering to help canvas, make phone calls and support prospective families with the application process.

Ms. Santos noted that the Viewpoint commercial is airing this month in the New York City market and the documentary will be presented tonight at to all staff at the NCS Holiday Party. She shared that Managing Director of Finance Michelle Rumph worked with Soapbox Engage to set up payment of donations to NCS via credit card and other options in addition to PayPal. Other updates included the positive responses to family surveys conducted in November at both campuses with questions based on the NYC DOE Spring 2024 survey results and identified areas of growth (increasing communication between school staff and families and more meal options for Scholars), the planned surveys that will be sent in January to collect data from middle school families and Scholars in support of the proposed High School expansion, the work by consultant Jenn Lindsay on the High School financial model that will be presented at the Board of Trustees meeting in either February or March and efforts to engage donors for the annual fundraising project.

### **3. Special Education Presentation**

Rachel Viegas, Director of Special Education, provided the Board with an overview of her education and professional background. She discussed the positions and responsibilities of her team consisting of Special Education Coordinators, a Behavior Specialist, an Autism Program Specialist and a Director of Related Services. She discussed the role and contributions of consultants Jennifer Manning in integrated co-teaching and Nancy Tarshis in targeting teacher use of Social Thinking language and individual student supports, teacher accountability measured through Domain 5 of the Danielson evaluation rubric, the work to clarify enrollment for the NCS Autism Program and professional development for the Special Education Team. Finally, she discussed her plans for Special Education in 2025 and beyond to support Scholars and their families and provide additional learning opportunities to staff through various programs and school partnerships.

### **4. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Ms. Hubbell to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2024 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

### **5. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. McCormick informed the Board about the NYC DOE's Project Open Arms, which provides families and schools with resources to help them navigate the upcoming policy changes expected with the Presidential transition that may affect immigrant and undocumented families. The project is involving charter schools in its endeavors.

Martha Vega, Director of Multilingual Learning will attend the January Board meeting to discuss how NCS is supporting families during this difficult time.

NYSED Regent Shino Tanikawa visited the Harlem campus on December 13<sup>th</sup> and received a building tour from Principal Soper and Assistant Principal Keitt, which included visiting classrooms and speaking with Scholars and staff. She also discussed family engagement and communication with Mr. McCormick and Ms. Santos. Regent Tanikawa was very impressed with the school and will be invited back for events and celebrations.

Mr. McCormick noted that the Cycle One Evaluations for all instructional leaders, teachers, operations members and related services providers are wrapping up as Winter Break approaches and everyone will receive at least one written evaluation report from their supervisor. One domain with two components (classroom culture and instruction) has been added to the evaluations. Rubric-based evaluations are in the final stages of being created for several network-based staff with non-instructional roles, and once these are completed all NCS personnel will receive at least three evaluation reports per year. Mr. McCormick advised the Board that satisfaction surveys will be sent to NCS staff to obtain their input, that feedback will be received after the Winter Break and results and trends will be shared with the Board at the January meeting.

Mr. McCormick provided highlights from the work of the DEI Committee and pointed to the Principals' reports recounting events and celebrations that took place in November at both schools. Lastly, Mr. McCormick reviewed the November data on attendance, enrollment, and behavior. Enrollment is consistent across the network from the budget target 1073 and the rate of attendance is 92.6% as of December 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **6. Finance Update**

Ms. Rumph reminded the Board of the steps that have been taken to gather information regarding the potential buyout of the building at 411 Wales Avenue and ground lease from Civic Builders and indicated that she sent the presentation and rent/purchase comparison chart for their review. In addition, she advised that the property owner does not wish to sell its interest to NCS/Friends of NCS. A discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Dr. Jenkins for NCS to enter into a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Civic Builders for the buyout of the building at 411 Wales Avenue and ground lease contingent upon obtaining financing through Build NYC Resource Corporation and was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Mr. Schneider to engage the services of Norton Rose Fulbright to represent the interests of Neighborhood Charter Schools and Friends of NCS, Inc. in the transaction for the buyout of the building at 411 Wales Avenue and ground lease from Civic Builders and was unanimously approved.

**7. Executive Session**

A motion was made by Mr. Schneider and seconded by Ms. Baker 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 Dr. Jenkins to exit executive session and was unanimously approved.

**8. Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Baker made a motion which was seconded by Dr. Jenkins, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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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 18, 2024.

Dated: December 18, 2024