

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
August 27, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held on August 27, 2025, at 691 St. Nicholas Avenue, New York 10030, and via video. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.

Trustees Present:

Heidi Baker
Stephanie Hubbell (via video)
Morgan Jenkins
Walter Rendon
Cliff Schneider (via video)

Trustees Absent:

Wylie Fennell

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Rumph
Michelle Santos

Three (3) out of six (6) seated Trustees were in attendance in person and two (2) out of six (6) seated Trustees were in attendance via videoconference. Five (5) out of six (6) 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 announced that Everardo Jefferson submitted a letter of resignation from the Board effective as of the end of July 23, 2025, meeting. He thanked Mr. Jefferson for his extremely valuable service on the Board and ongoing support of NCS and reminded the current Board members of the need to recruit more Trustees.

Thereafter, Mr. Schneider 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 July 23, 2025 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

3. Approval of NCS K-8 Family Handbook

Ms. Santos presented the updated version of the NCS K-8 Family Handbook for SY 25-26 to the Board, noting that the following changes were made:

- Updated schedules;

- Changed language to reflect Lower School (Kindergarten-4th Grade) and Upper School (5th-8th Grade);
- Updated the transportation section to include reference to OMNY cards;
- Moved the escalation process higher up in the Handbook;
- Updated the hours that teachers can be contacted from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm to 7:30 am to 6:00 pm;
- Updated the NCS technology use and care to reflect the updated policy and fees;
- Updated the LIGHT values to reflect the new version;
- Updated the language around expulsions and mental health crisis to include current practices;
- Updated the contact information for each campus school-based teams;
- Added the NCS distraction-free policy;
- Added the staff gift policy (gifts cannot exceed \$50);
- Updated the table of contents to reflect the changes listed above.

In addition, Ms. Santos indicated that the technology contract was also updated and reviewed by NCS legal counsel.

After the changes, additions and updates were presented, a discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Ms. Baker and seconded by Ms. Hubbell to approve the NCS Family Handbook for SY 25-26 and was unanimously approved.

4. NYSED Interim Report for NCS: Harlem

Mr. Schneider informed the Board that NYSED issued its interim report from the Charter midterm visit to the Harlem campus in April 2025. NCS: Harlem was found to have met 8 out of 10 benchmarks, with employment of certified teachers and MLL enrollment listed as areas of growth. NCS has been requested to respond by next Tuesday with an improvement plan for both areas.

5. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Santos to provide an update from Operations. Ms. Santos informed the Board that many changes have been made to the NCS website to reflect the new school year, including changing the language to reflect Lower and Upper Schools, the addition of the distraction-free policy and the Board of Trustees page with updated bios. In other news, NCS leadership is working with consultant Sung-Ae to develop a blueprint for the future NCS High School. This part of the planning will involve a series of design sprints with various focuses that will include revisiting the NCS Key Design Elements and updating the mission statement to reflect a K-12 purpose. Dates and times will be proposed to the Board to receive updates and engage in the process.

Ms. Santos also provided an update regarding enrollment, with Operations collaborating with other departments to ensure NCS is on track to meet budget enrollment targets. NCS is above budgeted numbers for enrollment in Harlem and not at budget for general education students in the Bronx. As the first day of school approaches fluctuations in enrollment numbers are expected and seats will be backfilled in real time to maintain stability across schools as needed. Preparations are also underway for enrollment for SY 26-27, which includes revamping systems, enhancing branding and come up with a vision for marketing.

Finally, in terms of DEI, NCS leaders began their professional development discussing how to navigate difficult conversations surrounding race, gender and identity and staff will have a session when they will be invited to consider how their identities shape who they are as teachers and that relates to their work, homes and communities. Work is also taking place to build and strengthen community partnerships at both schools including connecting with the local NYPD precincts and businesses.

Mr. McCormick informed the Board that today was the second day of school for SY 25-26, with Orientation taking place on Monday, August 25th. The first two days have been half days, positive and have progressed smoothly. Teachers have been meetings with leaders in the afternoon after dismissal.

The month of August involved professional development for NCS staff. Leaders reported back on August 4th for multiple days of learning, while new teachers reported on August 14th. Thereafter all NCS staff reported to the Bronx campus for a Kickoff Event during which Megan Piphus, a puppeteer for Sesame Street was a presenter. During the Kickoff jackets were given to staff that have been employed by NCS for more than 10 years to honor their achievement of this milestone, all staff received a bag of NCS swag and a gathering was held for all at Bronx Brewery. A professional photographer and videographer were hired to capture the event. From August 19th until the 25th NCS staff set up their learning environments and received professional development. The video created of the Kickoff event was shown to the Board.

New York State has allocated funding for charter schools to hire security guards at their campuses, and NCS has been approved for quarterly reimbursement to hire up to two guards per campus based on enrollment. From the list of authorized vendors the Finance Committee has approved hiring guards from Daisy Diaz Security Consulting Inc., a company that has previous experience in school environments. Their representatives walked through the Bronx campus yesterday and through Harlem today. Alex Lewis, who has been the security guard at the Harlem campus for years, will assist with the onboarding of the new guards before shifting his focus to support the Harlem deans.

Mr. McCormick then presented the results of the 2025 New York State Exams. In terms of overall numbers, there was a 13% increase in passing scores in the ELA Exam across both schools from 2024, with a 12% increase in the scores of IEP students, a 15% increase in the scores of ASD students and an 11% increase in the scores of MLL students. As to the Math Exam, there was a 2% increase in passing scores across both schools from 2024, a 7% decrease in passing scores of IEP and ASD students, and a 1% increase in passing scores of MLL students. As to a breakdown by school, in the Bronx, the passing rate in the ELA exam is 14% higher and the passing rate in the Math exam is 6% lower than in 2024. In Harlem the passing rate in the ELA exam is 11% higher and the passing rate in the Math exam is 6% higher than in 2024. In the 5th Grade Science State Exam, 51% of students got Level 3 and Level 4, a similar number from the prior year. In the NYSESLAT, 11% of MLL students got “Commanding Level”. Further breakdowns of these statistics were also discussed.

Mr. McCormick advised that in terms of staffing NCS lost 4-5 people over the Summer, and that currently a 5th Grade ELA teacher is still needed in Harlem, as well as two SLPs. Finally, he highlighted the first updates by the new Principals for the beginning of SY 25-26.

6. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon informed the Board that NCS is currently working with the MMB+Co on the annual audit, and the draft will be presented to the Finance Committee in October before it is submitted on November 1st. It is still too early to look at firm numbers for the FY 26 budget, since enrollment is ongoing. In terms of updates on facilities, the application for bond financing for the purchase of the 411 Wales Avenue building was approved by Build NYC at their July Board of Trustees meeting and NCS is waiting on the next steps in the process. In addition, since the approval of the property tax exemption for 691 St. Nicholas Avenue building was granted, NCS has been working to obtain a refund for any property tax paid from April 30, 2024 to date.

Mr. Schneider reminded the Board that once the purchase of 411 Wales Avenue is completed there will be additional requirements for NCS to maintain a minimum sum of money in the bank and a minimum debt to income ratio.

7. Nominating and Governance Committee

A brief discussion regarding the need for a Chair for the Nominating and Governance Committee was held. Dr. Jenkins volunteered to take on the position. As such, the Chairs for the Committees are as follows:

Finance Committee: Mr. Rendon

Accountability Committee: Ms. Hubbell

Nominating and Governance Committee: Dr. Jenkins

Executive Director Evaluation Committee: Mr. Schneider

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Hubbell made a motion which was seconded by Dr. Jenkins, to adjourn the meeting and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 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 August 27, 2025.

Dated: August 27, 2025