

Neighborhood Charter Schools
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board Trustees
September 25, 2025

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”) of Neighborhood Charter Schools (the “Education Corporation” or “NCS”) was held via video on September 25, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

Trustees Present:

Heidi Baker
Wylie Fennell
Stephanie Hubbell
Morgan Jenkins
Walter Rendon
Cliff Schneider

Trustees Absent:

None

Others in Attendance:

Daniel McCormick
Michelle Santos
Michelle Rumph
Elizabeth Schroeder

Six (6) out of six (6) 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 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

Dr. Jenkins began the meeting and invited public comments. No comments were received.

2. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Ms. Hubbell and seconded by Ms. Baker to approve the minutes from the August 27, 2025 Board meeting and was unanimously approved.

3. Presentation by Elizabeth Schroeder, Director of Special Education

Mr. McCormick invited Ms. Schroeder to provide the Board with information regarding Special Education at NCS. Ms. Schroeder introduced herself and spoke about her educational and personal background and stated that this is her 12th year working at NCS. She discussed the current Special Education population across the schools that comprises 40% of the student body (246 Students with Disabilities in Harlem and 118 in the Bronx, 75 students in the Autism program in Harlem and 61 in the Bronx) and the programs that are offered at NCS (Autism, ICT Classrooms, and 12:1 Program). She presented the goals and priorities for

SY25-26, including alignment across schools with the impact of 12 people in her department, collaboration including Social Thinking feedback and cumulative evaluations to assess teachers' capabilities, providing support to teachers through targeted professional development support, bringing back case conferences and providing supports by grade, and supporting students through the new 12:1 full day program and teaching social emotional learning through the Social Thinking curriculum for all students in grades K-6. Finally, she presented the leadership structure at each school (3 Special Education Coordinators and 1 Mental Health and Behavior Program Management) and at the network level (Director, Autism Program Manager, Special Education Projects Manager, and Intervention Specialist).

4. Executive Director's Report

Mr. McCormick invited Ms. Santos to provide updates from Operations. Ms. Santos informed the Board that High School planning is underway with a deadline to submit the charter expansion applications by December 1, 2025. The work is currently taking place in day long design sessions with consultants Jenn Lindsay and Sung-Ae Yang. The first session dealt with programming and school mission. The second design sprint session took place today focusing on answering the questions of "who we are", "what will sell it", and "why send your student to our High School", as well as deciding on values that are appropriate for older students, building a place for students to figure out their "why" and providing them with multiple pathways to accomplish that. There is a session scheduled for Trustees on October 9th to discuss the work that has taken place thus far. Ms. Santos also indicated that she created a document that outlines all the requirements for the expansion applications.

The Harlem campus was closed on September 11 and 12 due to a water main break that happened in the Inwood neighborhood and services the school. NCS worked diligently to communicate with staff, families and vendors about the closures and get the building ready to resume classes once the problem was fixed. NCS also notified NYSED of the closures and received confirmation that no further action is needed at this time. In terms of other NYSED submissions, Mr. McCormick and Ms. Santos are working on Benchmark Action Plans to submit to the NYSED liaison, Ms. Brandy Marshall, listing the steps that NCS is taking to improve performance in Benchmark 9, "Enrollment, Recruitment, and Retention" and Benchmark 10, "Legal Compliance". These include updating the enrollment policy and increasing marketing strategies to increase the number of enrolled MLL students for Benchmark 9 and working to increase teacher certification for Benchmark 10.

In terms of enrollment for SY25-26, NCS is currently over budget in number of students in General Education and ASD Program at both campuses. Recruitment for SY26-27 will begin on October 1st. Other initiatives that are being discussed include forming a Parent Volunteer Partnership Group to streamline family engagement at both campuses, building clearer systems, accountability, communications and high quality experiences for students in the After School Program, launching a Mentorship Program for 8th Grade students to mentor younger students at both campuses, and forming community partnerships.

Mr. McCormick informed the Board that the cost of health benefits for employer sponsored plans is increasing and that the initial renewal quote from Anthem, the current provider, is 41% higher than the current rate. NCS is working with the broker to negotiate a lower amount and is seeking quotes from other carriers as well as looking into self-funding programs. Staff have been informed that changes to insurance carrier or out-of-pocket costs are coming. The decision will be made by October 27th.

Mr. McCormick attended the LeveragED Leadership Conference that took place last week in Atlanta, GA. He met with other Executive Directors and Heads of School from charter organizations in NY, CT, GA, NV, OH, and UT, and engaged in professional development with a focus on a School Health Assessment to assess strengths and needs of their schools. This is part of a year-long program that provides him with monthly coaching and will include two visits by members of the LeveragED Foundation to the Harlem campus to support the implementation of the Assessment. The first will take place on November 10th when they will visit classrooms and speak with teachers as part of the Assessment. As to NCS, the first cycle of Coaching and Development of Teachers began last week using the Danielson Framework for Teaching that includes Social Thinking and co-teaching rubrics added by NCS to provide targeted feedback and evaluations of all classroom teachers. Assistant Principals are visiting all classrooms with other leaders (Special Education, Academic Directors, Principals) for formal, full period observations and informal drop-ins. In terms connecting with elected officials, the NY Charter Center will hold an individualized meeting for NCS on October 4th to discuss how engage with them in the current political climate and an open meeting on October 9th to discuss the upcoming legislative session in Albany and what priorities and lobbying will occur on behalf of the sector. Finally, Mr. McCormick highlighted the Principal reports by Mr. Jones (Harlem) and Ms. Cepeda (Bronx) and their accomplishments in the first month of the school year.

5. Finance Update

Mr. Rendon informed the Board that the schedule for the Finance Committee is lighter this month as NCS prepares for the annual audit. The audit will be presented next month by representatives from Mengel, Metzger, Barr & Co., LLP (MMB) to the Committee. In addition, as it is the beginning of FY26, enrollment is still firming up, and next month will be the first time that numbers for budget vs. actual will be presented. In terms of the 411 Wales building purchase, an appraisal may be needed as part of the bond financing through Build NYC. It is expected that FONCS will close on the deal by January 2026 before the new NYC Mayor takes office.

6. NCS Board Committees

Mr. Schneider held a brief discussion regarding membership in the NCS Board Committees. At the last meeting we filled the vacant chair position in the Nominating and Governance Committee, and Board members were given the opportunity to consider whether they would like to add or change their memberships at this month's meeting. Committee membership is now set as follows:

Finance Committee:

Chair: Mr. Rendon Members: Mr. Schneider, Mr. Fennell, Ms. Baker

Staff: Michelle Rumph

Accountability Committee:

Chair: Ms. Hubbell Members: Ms. Baker, Dr. Jenkins

Staff: Dan McCormick

Nominating and Governance Committee:

Chair: Dr. Jenkins Members: Mr. Rendon, Ms. Hubbell

