APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday December 19, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Location
1818 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Trustees Present
A. Vasquez, D. Ortiz, M. Vargas, N. Sunshine, N. Weiss, W. Council

Trustees Absent
A. Cummings

Guests Present
Crystal Joye, Fred Givens, K. Valbrun, L. Garcia, W. Ramos

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Vasquez called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Dec 19, 2024 at 7:04 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

A. Vasquez made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 11-21-24.
N. Weiss seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Community Comments

Wendy Ramos shared the upcoming school events:

December 2024

- **December 20**: High School Homecoming Dance from 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM
- **December 23 – January 2, 2025**: Winter Recess

January 2025

- **January 8**: Progress Reports Distributed
- **January 10 & 13**: Family Meetings
- **January 17 – 24**: Interim Assessments

January 29: Data Day

Nik shared that the last book fair was in 2019. The book fair made about $700. Students did not have much exposure under the last Director of Curriculum Instruction.

Scholastic was reluctant to work with us again. We did a tabletop book fair.

This year we distributed book bucks, to encourage reading. A lot more advertising; open all day and during parent-teacher conferences.

Nikolas Weiss shared that any donation made by the board for the next book fair will be allocating funds to each student and the possibility of using remaining funds for future book fairs.

The group discussed the potential for online shopping and replenishing books that sell out quickly.

Overall Nikolas Weiss emphasized the positive impact of the book fair on student engagement and school culture.

Social Media & Fundraising Strategy

Nicky Sunshine suggests using video and social media to capture the excitement of events like the book fair to increase engagement.

Karen Valbrun mentions the weekly photo updates and encourages more sharing on social media to boost school visibility.

Discussion on the timing of fundraising events, with a suggestion to avoid the holidays and consider a tabletop book fair instead of a large case fair.

Nicky Sunshine also highlights the success of the tabletop book fair and the potential for future growth with more advertising and teacher buy-in.

II. School Updates

A. General Updates

Renewal Preparations

Karen Valbrun provided an overview of the upcoming renewal process, including the focus areas of academic performance, operational effectiveness, and school culture. She also outlines the key areas of focus for the renewal, including student enrollment, retention, and compliance with charter and regulatory requirements. As well as provided emphasis on the need for a strategic plan and evidence of impact to demonstrate the school's progress and future direction.

Discussion on the importance of board alignment and preparation for the renewal interview, with a suggestion to conduct a board survey to set goals and ensure everyone is on the same page.

Cash Flow and Financial Updates

Li'Esha Garcia presented an overview of the school's cash flow, including monthly, quarterly, and yearly expenses and revenues.

She explained the school's financial situation at the time, focusing on managing expenses and ensuring financial stability.

She discussed potential areas for cost savings, including adjustments to security and cleaning
services.

She also provided an update on the search for a new financial institution and the status of the line of credit with various banks.

Middle School Update

Crystal Joye shared the success of the student-led conferences, highlighting the positive feedback from students and the importance of community involvement.

There was a discussion about the upcoming professional development sessions for teachers, focusing on leveraging technology, social-emotional learning, and differentiated strategies for English language learners and students with disabilities.

Karen Valbrun mentioned the launch of the school store and the recent hiring of a new teacher to ensure continuity for students.

Wendy Ramos and other speakers provided additional updates on school spirit activities and the positive impact of the book fair.

HIgh School Update

Fred Givens shared the success of students in securing scholarships and gaining acceptance into prestigious colleges.

There was a discussion about the importance of financial aid completion and how positive stories like the one Fred shared could be used for recruitment.

Nicky Sunshine suggested leveraging the school's success with students with learning disabilities as a recruitment strategy.

Karen Valbrun acknowledged the challenge of attracting more students with IEPs and the need for additional special education teachers.

III. Closing Items

A. **The school team shared a token of appreciate with the trustees**

B. **Karen Valbrun shared a draft of the newsletter**

C. **Nicky shared that the scholastic book fair; was a win**

D. **Megan Vargas shared the we should emphazie that we are 6-12 school**

E. **Jamal Mantin will be invited to a meeting to share**

F. **Nicky Sunshine asked if we had a mentorship program; the school shared that we have a partnership Brotherhood Sister Sol and they have a program here with us however it is not a 1:1.**

G. **Megan Vargas was wondering about alumni; maybe create a promotional video share; Nicky Sunshine wondered if we could do a blast email; maybe the spring.**

H.

Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Ramos