APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday November 20, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Location
1818 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Trustees Present
A. Vasquez, N. Weiss, R. Zumaya, W. Council

Trustees Absent
A. Cummings, D. Ortiz, M. Vargas

Guests Present
Clara Pena-Hiraldo, Fred Givens, K. Valbrun, L. Garcia, Lesly Humbert, Lily Cabrera, Meredith Hosey, Nidia Santos, 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 Nov 20, 2025 at 7:04 PM.

C.

Approve Minutes

A. Vasquez made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30th meeting.
W. Council seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
A. Vasquez made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 10-30-25.
W. Council seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Community Comments

Angel Vasquez first explained the guidelines for community participation.

- A parent raised concerns about the timing and method of communication with families regarding assessments and other important updates.
- It was suggested that the board be engaged in future discussions about how to strengthen supports for parents and students.
- School leadership and the Parent Association discussed ways the PA could assist with additional resources, including classroom materials and art supplies.

II. School Update

A. School Report

1. Community Events & School Culture

- Thanksgiving Dinner: Nov. 25 (4–6 PM)
- Parent–Teacher Conferences: Dec. 3 (1–5 PM) and Dec. 4 (4–8 PM)
- Perfect Attendance Celebrations: Dec. 7
- Winter “Kindness Closet” opens Dec. 8 (no-cost winter items for families)
- STEAM Fair: Dec. 10
- Family Zoom Meeting: Dec. 15
- Spirit Week: Dec. 15–19
- High School Homecoming Dance: Dec. 19 (6–10 PM)

2. Enrollment

- Current enrollment: **598 students** (decrease from prior month)
- Attendance for October: **94.4%** (goal: 95%)
- Current Special Education: **98 students** (projected increase)
- English Language Learners: **92 students**

Leadership outlined the new **Enrollment Success Toolkit** with three focus areas:

- **Family outreach:** root-cause analysis of withdrawals

- **Retention risk analysis**
- **Engagement with newly accepted families**

Internal staff will take on enrollment responsibilities; external vendors are also being reviewed. A potential partnership with Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem is being explored for pipeline development.

3. Academic & Instructional Update

Middle School

- Multiple vacancies remain: 7th & 8th grade science, 6th grade math, school-wide speech.
- Quarter 1 performance concerns:
  - Grade 6: 22 of 41 students failing one or more courses
  - Grade 7: 21 of 58
  - Grade 8: 41 of 85
- Leadership is restructuring to stabilize instruction, improve tiered intervention, and reduce teacher coverage burdens.
- New deans have been placed; SEL and culture systems reinforced.

High School - Presented by Fred Givens

- Over 90% pass rates across most departments.
- ELL performance gaps remain, especially in math and biology.
- AP Computer Science launched school-wide for 10th grade; foundational supports will need strengthening.
- College application progress is strong; senior class is on track.

4. Middle School Leadership Transition

- Dr. Joye submitted resignation effective November.
- Parents were notified; staff were briefed in a phased approach.
- Grade-level meetings with students are scheduled with social workers present.
- A parent raised concern regarding students learning the news from staff before families; leadership will follow up individually.

5. Operations & Safety

- Additional building cameras installed.
- Partnership created with Marble House for expanded mental health services.
- Website updates planned to improve accuracy and parent access to information.

Finance Update (Presented by CFOO Li’Esha Garcia)

- **Financial Position (as of October 2025)**

- **Revenue**
  - Revenue is up **$344K** compared to last year due to per-pupil rate increase.
  - Enrollment shortfall remains the major challenge: **85 students below budget**, representing **$1.6M** in lost revenue.
- **Expenses**
  - Total expenses down **$200K** compared to same period last year due to reductions in salaries, instructional costs, facilities, and fundraising spending.
- **Lease-Back Structure**
  - Current Civic lease-back is costing the school **$2.2M annually** with no rental assistance eligibility.
  - CFOO is exploring alternatives:
    - Bond structures to buy out Civic
    - Renegotiation with Civic
    - Possibility of restructuring for lower rates
- **Audit**
  - Template received; awaiting management letter.
  - Audit delays are timing-related; no performance issues identified.

III. Closing Items

A. Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Ramos