APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday December 18, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Location
1818 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Trustees Present
D. Ortiz, N. Weiss, R. Zumaya, W. Council

Trustees Absent
A. Cummings, A. Vasquez, M. Vargas

Guests Present
Emmanuel Alagbon, Fred Givens, K. Valbrun, L. Garcia, Regina Walker, W. Ramos (remote)

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

W. Council called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Dec 18, 2025 at 7:04 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

W. Council made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 11-20-25.
N. Weiss seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Community Comments

The following upcoming and recent school community events were shared for awareness:

- December 19: High School Homecoming
- January 6: Middle School New Year's Breakfast
- January 7: Open House
- January 10: Open House
- January 26: Family Zoom Meeting

E. Board Candidate Introductions

Regina Walker was introduced.

II. School Update

A. School Report

Presented by: Dr. Karen Valbrun Executive Director & Leadership Team

Instruction & Academic Priorities (Middle School)
The Executive Director provided an overview of key instructional and academic focus areas, including:

- Strengthening school culture and student support systems
- Science Fair planning and execution
- Consolidation of student support services under a unified structure
- Expansion and integration of the arts
- Continued development of inclusive classroom practices

Safety & Operations

- Distribution of Moose Jackets
- Confirmation that the school remains in compliance with all applicable requirements

Family Engagement

- Family Breakfast events
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- ELL training offered through Parent University

Human Resources Update

Science (Position Filled)

- A new instructional model ensures full science coverage across all grades
- Newly hired teacher instructs all 8th grade Science
- 7th grade Science is shared between the new hire and Ms. Caldwell (6th grade Science)
- This structure maintains instructional continuity and strengthens middle school coverage

Physical Education & Health (Position Filled)

- Schedule adjustments allow full coverage of both PE and Health
- Changes create additional capacity for a Co-Dean to provide targeted culture and behavior support

Speech Services (Secured)

- An in-house Speech Pathologist has been secured through Taylor'd Speech
- Scheduling and logistics are in progress
- Services will begin following the school break

Intervention & Literacy Support

- A Literacy Consultant has been contracted
- Consultant will conduct small-group instruction to support low-level readers and strengthen intervention services

Presented by : Li'Esha Garcia, CFOO

Fundraising Pipeline Overview

- The fundraising pipeline is intentionally limited to high-alignment funders to protect internal capacity
- The portfolio includes national, corporate, and NYC-based foundations to diversify funding risk
- Focus remains on restricted or strategic funding rather than reliance on general operating support

Enrollment Update & Outreach Efforts

Current Strategies

- Posting and sponsoring enrollment content on social media
- Attending and identifying additional enrollment fairs in Harlem and the Bronx
- Ongoing enrollment communications with families

- Monthly recruitment visits conducted by the Parent Liaison and Student Registrar to schools where 5th grade is the terminal grade
- Exploration of a partnership with Possip to develop an enrollment success toolkit

Family Communications

- Prospective Family Newsletter distributed on December 15, 2025

Upcoming Enrollment Fairs

- January 10, 2026: Harlem Charter School Fair & Kids Activity Expo (Harlem)
- January 14, 2026: Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School Fair (Bronx)
- February 2, 2026: Harlem Charter School Fair & Kids Activity Expo (Bronx)

Middle School Update
Academics

- Focus on Close Reading as a core instructional strategy to support deep text analysis, evidence-based reasoning, and critical thinking

Attendance

- 73 students achieved 100% attendance for the month
- Grades 6–8 earned multiple 100% attendance days, celebrated with hallway parties

Accountability

- Mid-year teacher observations are currently underway

School Atmosphere

- Two (2) In-School Suspensions issued for Level 2 behaviors
- Two (2) Out-of-School Suspensions issued for Level 3 physical altercations
- One (1) Pre-Expulsion Hearing scheduled for January 5, 2026
- Distraction-Free School Policy: On average, three students per week were found with phones; violations were addressed in accordance with the student handbook

Presented by: Fred Givens, High School Principal

High School Update
Attendance (November)

- 9th Grade: 95.3%
- 10th Grade: 93.4%
- 11th Grade: 94.7%

- 12th Grade: 94.9%

Accountability (November)

- Eight (8) suspensions issued related to:
- Extreme disrespect
- Off-campus fighting
- Vaping

School Atmosphere
As of December 8:

- College scholarships awarded total $771,000
- College acceptances: 14 of 94 seniors (15%)

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 8:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Ramos