APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday March 26, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
1818 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10031

Trustees Present
A. Cummings, D. Ortiz, M. Vargas, R. Zumaya

Trustees Absent
None

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

I. Opening Items

A. Record Attendance

B. Call the Meeting to Order

A. Cummings called a meeting of the board of trustees of New Heights Academy Charter School to order on Thursday Mar 26, 2026 at 7:16 PM.

C. Approve Minutes

- A concern was raised regarding **incomplete attendance and missing participant names** in the prior meeting minutes.
- Board agreed to **revise and confirm accuracy** using the sign-in sheet before final approval.
- Final vote on approval was **deferred pending revisions**.

D. Community Comments

- Speakers were allotted **2 minutes each**, with no board dialogue.

Summary of Comments:

- **Parent Perspective:**
  - Positive experience with the school; intent to enroll additional family members.
- **Staff Perspective (Veteran Teacher):**
  - Highlighted school legacy (20-year milestone, leadership history).
  - Raised concerns regarding:
    - Enrollment decline
    - Staffing challenges
    - School climate and student engagement
  - Emphasized need for **collective problem-solving and community collaboration**.
- **Alumni Perspectives:**
  - Strong appreciation for the school's impact historically.
  - Concerns about:
    - Staff turnover
    - Student morale
    - Changes in school culture
  - Calls for:
    - Increased alumni engagement
    - Mentorship opportunities
    - Programs to support current students

II. School Update

A. School Report

A. School Report
Presented by: Dr. Karen Valbrun, Executive Director & Leadership Team

General School Updates

- Spring Break: April 2–10; students return April 13

- NYSESLAT Testing: April 13–17
- ELA State Exams: Week of April 20
- Parent-Teacher Conferences:
    - Virtual: April 29
    - In-person: April 30

Enrollment & Attendance

- Current enrollment: **596 students** (vs. budgeted 683)
- Shortfall: **87 students (~$1.73M revenue impact)**
- Attendance rate: ~94.7%

Finance Report
Presented by Li'Esha Garcia CFOO

Financial Position

- Cash: ~$1.39M (decline from prior year)
- Accounts receivable and overall assets decreased year-over-year
- Equity down ~$1.2M

Key Financial Concerns

- Enrollment-driven revenue decline
- Tight liquidity and cash flow constraints
- Projected **deficit ~ $1.5M** (inclusive of accruals and depreciation)

Board Discussion

- Need for **more conservative enrollment projections**
- Budget scenarios being developed:
    - Based on 605 and 629 students
- Leadership implementing:
    - Cost containment measures
    - Staffing adjustments where feasible

Academic & Program Updates
Instruction & Student Performance

- Focus on:
    - Data-driven instruction
    - Weekly progress monitoring
    - Targeted small group interventions
- Early indicators show:
    - Growth in some subject areas
    - Continued need for improvement in others

Staffing Updates

- New hires:
  - Guidance Counselor (starting April)
  - Gym Teacher (starting April)
- Middle School Principal position posted

Presented by Fred Givens, HS Principal

College & Career Readiness

- ~97% college acceptance rate reported
- College trips and visits scheduled
- Career Day hosted with alumni participation

Student Representative Report
Presented by: Emmanuel Alagbon

Key Themes:

- **Communication Challenges:**
  - Delays in sharing schedules and event details
  - Inconsistent access to information among students
- **Instructional Concerns:**
  - Increased use of substitute teachers
  - Impact on student preparedness for exams
- **Positive Developments:**
  - Improved communication efforts (in progress)
  - Strong student engagement in mock exams
  - Positive community-building events (e.g., staff vs. student basketball game)

Recommendations:

- Improve communication systems beyond email
- Reinforce consistent teaching coverage
- Provide earlier notice for key academic events

III. Executive Session

A. Student Matter

Discussion of a student issues.

IV. 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 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Ramos