APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday April 30, 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
Fred Givens, K. Valbrun, L. Garcia, Michelle Anderson (remote), W. Ramos

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 Apr 30, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

C. Approve Minutes from the 2.26.2026 Board of Trustees Meeting

A. Cummings made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 02-26-26.
D. Ortiz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

D. Approve Minutes from the 3.26.2026 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees

A. Cummings made a motion to approve the minutes from Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees on 03-26-26.
M. Vargas seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. Approve Minutes from the 3.26.2026 Board of Trustees Meeting

A. Cummings made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 03-26-26.
M. Vargas seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Board Election

M. Vargas made a motion to to vote Dr. Michelle Anderson as a trustee.
A. Cummings seconded the motion.
DOE approval had been received prior to the vote
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
M. Vargas made a motion to to elect Amryll Cummings as Interim Chair.
D. Ortiz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

G. Board Leadership Updates

- Formal acknowledgment of the resignation of Angel Vasquez as as the former Board Chair
- Recognition of contributions from the former Chair and staff representative

M. Vargas made a motion to appoint Amryll Cummings as the Interim Board Chair.
D. Ortiz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.
A. Cummings made a motion to appoint Megan Vargas as the Vice Chair.
D. Ortiz seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

H. Community Comments

- No community members signed up for public comment
- Student representative was not present

II. School Update

A. School Report

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

Key Dates & Events (May):

- May 1: High School Decision Day
- May 8: Caregiver Appreciation Breakfast
- May 14: National Honor Society Induction
- May 16: Kindness Closet & Registration Event
- May 18: Family Zoom Meeting
- May 20: Arts Festival (Dance, Music, Art)
- May 29–30: Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Staff Appreciation Week (early May)

School Culture & Highlights:

- Continued emphasis on strong school community and family culture
- Student and alumni engagement highlighted through school-produced media
- Successful March events: Literacy Night, college tours, student portraits

Parent Survey Results (April):

- Overall positive feedback (~90% favorable)
- Strengths: safety, communication, engagement, academic progress
- Identified opportunity for continued improvement toward 100% satisfaction

ACADEMIC UPDATES

Presented by: Li'Esha Garcia, CFOO

Middle School:

- Strong preparation for state exams
- Performance highlights:
  - Math & Science averages ~78–88% on internal assessments
  - ELA proficiency: 55–70% across grades
- Staff collaboration noted as a major strength

Presented by: Fred Givens, HS Principal

High School:

- Regents prep showed growth across most subjects

- 100% college acceptance (pending final CUNY application resolution)
- $8.2 million in scholarships and financial aid secured
- Notable acceptances include: NYU, University of Michigan, Boston University, Middlebury

Student Survey (Grades 9–12):

- 67% participation (278 students)
- Majority responses ranged from “somewhat agree” to “agree” across:
  - Engagement
  - Sense of belonging
  - Teacher support
- Areas for growth: perceptions of fairness in rules and consequences
- Board requested qualitative feedback to be shared at a future meeting

Presented by: Li'Esha Garcia, CFOO
Enrollment & Operations

- Current enrollment: **593 students**
- Projected enrollment: **630 students**
- Enrollment decline since 2019: **22% decrease**
- District comparison decline: 13%

Recruitment Efforts:

- Continued outreach to families and community partners
- Follow-up with applicants to secure enrollment commitments

Financial Report
Revenue & Expenses:

- Total revenue: ~$13.45M
- Total expenses: ~$13.26M
- Operating margin remains extremely tight

Key Financial Concerns:

- $1.7M below budget due to enrollment decline
- $2M annual facility costs
- Limited liquidity despite meeting debt obligations

Year-to-Date Position:

- ~$228K surplus (subject to year-end salary accrals)

Conclusion:

- Financial sustainability requires restructuring and operational changes

Presented by: Dr. Karen Valbrun Executive Director

Strategic Initiative: 6–12 Grade Model

- Transition to unified **Grades 6–12 structure**
- Goals:
  - Improve academic continuity
  - Strengthen student relationships
  - Provide earlier access to advanced coursework
- Organizational restructuring to begin May–June

III. Executive Session (if needed)

A. Governance Matters

- Not held

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 7:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
A. Cummings