APPROVED

New Heights Academy Charter School

Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting

Date and Time
Thursday June 25, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Location
1818 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10031

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

Trustees Absent
None

Guests Present
K. Valbrun, L. Garcia, 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 Jun 25, 2026 at 7:09 PM.

C. Community Comments

The Board opened the meeting with community comments. The public comment guidelines were read, including that each speaker would have up to two minutes to speak, the Board would accommodate up to 10 speakers, and there would be no dialogue or back-and-forth between speakers and the Board.

The individuals who had signed up to speak were identified as Marisol Rodriguez, Leslie Humbert, and Sharon Collins. Marisol Rodriguez and Sharon Collins were not present at the time they were called. Leslie Humbert was present and provided comments regarding Regents testing. She recognized the Science Department/Biology Department and thanked staff members who supported students during Regents administration.

The Board noted that if Sharon Collins joined later, she would be given the opportunity to speak.

D. Approve Minutes

A. Cummings made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 05-28-26.
M. Anderson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

E. Approve Minutes

A. Cummings made a motion to approve the minutes from Board of Trustees Meeting on 06-22-26.
M. Anderson seconded the motion.
The board **VOTED** to approve the motion.

F. Annual NYSED Financial Disclosure Form Completion

The Board paused to allow time for completion and collection of the forms.

II. School Update

A. School Report

Dr. Karen Valbrun provided the school update. She reflected on the school year, noting that the year required the school community to confront difficult realities related to academic outcomes, enrollment trends, finances, staffing, operations, and compliance responsibilities. She also acknowledged student resilience, staff commitment, and the school's ongoing work to strengthen systems and build a more sustainable foundation. Dr. Valbrun congratulated the Class of 2026, including both middle school and high school graduates.

The following enrollment and student data were shared:

- Current enrollment: **592 students**

- May attendance rate: **91.2%**
- Students with special needs: **111**
- English Language Learners: **91**

Finance Update
Li'Esha Garcia provided a finance update. She noted that enrollment remains a significant challenge and that the school is continuing to focus on registration, particularly in grades 6, 9, and 10.

The Board was informed that the school's financial position remains consistent with prior updates from the year. The following financial information was shared:

- Revenue through May was approximately **$12.66 million**
- Expenditures through May were approximately **$12.80 million**
- The school was operating at a deficit of approximately **$142,000**
- Total assets declined by approximately **$2.6 million** compared to the prior year, primarily due to depreciation
- Liabilities decreased by approximately **$1.5 million**, as debt continued to decrease

It was noted that the school continues to reduce costs where possible to offset enrollment-related revenue shortfalls.

Academic Update — Middle School
Dr. Valbrun provided an update on middle school academic performance. Final state assessment results were not yet available and were expected later in the summer. Preliminary assessment data indicated that grades 7 and 8 showed stronger performance, particularly in ELA and math, with more than half of students performing in the highest achievement bands. Grade 8 also demonstrated meaningful growth from winter to spring in both content areas.

Grade 6 was identified as the greatest area of need. Dr. Valbrun noted that while some students moved out of the lowest performance bands, overall achievement remained below expectations. The school will provide targeted instruction, interventions, acceleration, and ongoing progress monitoring for students entering the next grade level.

The Board discussed the need to monitor academic growth for the current sixth-grade cohort as they move into seventh grade. Dr. Valbrun noted that staffing changes, ELL support disruptions, and the absence of a full-time middle school principal may have impacted student supports during the year.

Academic Update — High School / Regents
Fred Givens provided an update on preliminary Regents results. He noted that results were still being finalized and additional scores were pending. Preliminary data showed

several bright spots, including strong performance in English, Biology, and certain other Regents exams.
Mr. Givens reported that English and Biology were expected to be over 90%. Global History was estimated in the low 80% range, while U.S. History was approximately 73% at the time of the update. Geometry was identified as an area of concern, with preliminary performance at approximately 31%.

Mr. Givens also noted that students with IEPs and English Language Learners were performing close to or on par with general education students in several areas. He stated that there did not appear to be significant performance gaps between special populations and general education students in many of the preliminary results reviewed.

The Board requested finalized Regents data, including comparison data, prior-year scores, and subgroup performance. Mr. Givens stated that the finalized information would be available by June 30 or shortly thereafter, with AP scores to be added when available.

A trustee asked how students would be informed of their scores and opportunities to retake exams in August. Mr. Givens stated that students would receive their scores through Google Classroom and that students had been informed that August and January were future testing opportunities.

B. Adoption of the SY 2026–2027 Operating Budget

The Board Chair stated that the **2026–2027 budget would not be presented or approved at this meeting**. The Board is awaiting an independent, detailed financial analysis to ensure that the school is on sound financial footing before taking action on the budget.

The Board Chair stated that the Board would not act on the budget until that work is completed.
Questions and concerns were raised regarding the impact of the delayed budget approval on summer programming, staffing, teacher contracts, and communication with families.
The Board acknowledged these concerns and stated that the school would communicate information once it is available and can be shared accurately and holistically.

It was stated that funds were understood to be available to cover the summer program, pending final financial review and confirmation.

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 9:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
W. Ramos